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The art of the big deal

Sam Middleton tops the list for mega ranch sales, remains humble

By COLLEEN SCHREIBER
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LUBBOCK, Texas — Just shy of his 75th birthday, Sam Middleton, the current proprietor of Chas. S. Middleton & Son now with 50-some years under his belt, had his biggest year in the ranch real estate business in 2022.

The company sold over 750,000 acres of land last year and did over \$1 billion in sales. It was a year of mega deals for the 100-plus-year-old family business started by Sam's grandfather Charles Singleton Middleton.

"We sold the 6666 Ranch; we sold the Matador Ranch; we sold Boone Pickens's ranch, and we had several other sizable transactions," says Middleton. "It just all happened at once and we were fortunate to be able to handle those sales."

The company is no stranger to

the big deals. In 2016, Middleton was part of a team who sold the legendary Waggoner Ranch, the largest ranch under one fence.

To say that the times were different when Middleton's grandfather, Charles Singleton Middleton, started the business in 1920, is an understatement. Gone are the days of Big Chief tablets, crude hand-drawn maps, and a Polaroid camera.

"My dad told me back in the 1920s, all one had to do to get in the real estate business was send a box top off of a Post Toasties along with \$2," says Middleton. "In other words, anyone could hang up a shingle and be in the ranch real estate business."

Today, when a ranch is sold, the contract is often 25-plus pages and there is due diligence, inspections and contingencies.

"It might take four months to close a sale because of all the laws and legalities in today's world," says Middleton. "But back in the 1930s, my grandfather would have a Big Chief tablet and he'd run out a one-page agreement and close the sale the next week. Things were simple back then. A lot of times they didn't even talk about mineral conveyance. It was, I'll give



ALWAYS A SELLER'S BROKER, Sam Middleton, has spent a lifetime selling ranches. He attributes the success he's had to his family's 100-plus-year reputation and the contacts that his grandfather and father made over the years, contacts that he then inherited. (Photo courtesy of Livestock Weekly)

\$12 an acre for this property."

It's always been a family business. Before Sam came along, his grandfather, his father, his mother and his aunt were the nucleus of the business, and it was that way for years. Later even his sister, two years younger, worked in the office.

Middleton says the business has prospered because of the contacts, the relationships, that

his grandfather and father established early on that have carried over to the third and now fourth generation.

"I've known a lot of good people who got into this business who weren't successful because they didn't have the contacts that I inherited," says Middleton. "Those contacts are probably the

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Atypical BSE case detected in South Carolina

On May 19, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) announced that an atypical case of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), a neurologic disease of cattle, has been found in a bovine animal that arrived at a slaughterhouse in South Carolina.

The approximately five-year-old or older beef cow tested positive following routine surveillance protocols and the carcass was condemned soon after. The animal possessed a radio frequency identification tag associated with a herd in Tennessee. USDA APHIS and state animal health officials will conduct a thorough investigation of the case.

"Atypical" BSE cases occur rarely and spontaneously, often in older cattle. This is only the nation's 7th case of atypical BSE, following a previous incident in 2018.

U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) president Justin Tupper issued the following statement:

"USCA is grateful to the nationwide team of veterinarians, animal health officials,

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Fallout on California's Prop 12 bubbles among affected stakeholders

The U.S. Supreme Court's affirmation in early May upholding California's Prop 12 animal welfare standards continues to spark responses from state pork organizations and legislators watching for the potential effect on local pork production.

Less than a week after the SCOTUS ruling, here are more related reactions:

The nation's largest pork producing states are analyzing next steps needed to comply with California's law that requires specific animal welfare procedures if companies outside of the state want to sell pork products in the Golden State. The North Carolina Pork Council, for example, said hog farmers in North Carolina don't understand how the State of California "has a say" on how hogs are raised in the Tarheel State and calls Prop 12 "the latest in a long list of challenges our farmers will overcome."

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) called the SCOTUS decision "very detrimental" for businesses that produce the most pork products annually, about 13.2 billion pounds. "I think it's going to be not the same as I would interpret the commerce laws of the Constitution and Congress' power to regulate it," Grassley told KMA News in an interview.

Grassley and fellow Sen. Joni Ernst (R) were unable to enact a challenge to Prop 12 when it was first proposed in 2021, following a ruling by a federal court rejecting the proposal.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen called the SCOTUS decision "a huge blow to producers and will raise food costs for consumers and small businesses already struggling with mounting inflation."

Pillen, who also is a hog producer, added in a news release

that the ruling may open the door for other types of farming operations to "find themselves under similar restrictions, which will only drive prices higher and higher."

Glynn Tonsor, professor of economics at Kansas State University, says the Prop 12 decision is likely to have several direct and indirect effects among retailers, packer-processors and hog producers who will need to identify what systems are most able to "reasonably

accommodate" the current California pork market.

"This latest development is another example of a vote-buy disconnect where voting-based signals for changes in protein production do not cleanly align — at least for most consuming residents — with consumer buying signals," Tonsor told Meatingplace in an email.

So far, procedures to certify whether pork producers are complying with Prop 12 and other enforcement protocols

have yet to be disclosed. The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), however, already has expressed concerns that the use of inspectors from California at farms outside of the state could spark certification problems. Distributing non-compliant pork in California, even inadvertently, may result in criminal and civil penalties that could include prison sentences, according to the current Prop 12 rules.

— Meatingplace.com

STX Beef buys Missouri Prime Beef Packers

STX Beef Company LLC, based in Corpus Christi, Texas, announced on May 16 its purchase of Missouri Prime Beef Packers, effective immediately.

"STX prides itself on taking care of our customers while offering customized solutions, and developing long-lasting commercial relationships," STX CEO Terry Maul said in a news

release sent to Meatingplace. "Missouri is home to a thriving beef industry, and we will be focused on delivering reliable service and dependable products to our customers."

Pleasant Hope, Mo.-based Missouri Prime Beef Packers processes about 750 head of cattle per day in its 88,000-square-foot facility, located on 256 acres

north of Springfield, Mo.

STX Beef, a portfolio company of Houston-based JDH Capital, also operates a 250,000-square-foot facility that processes more than 1,000 head of cattle per day. Its product line includes boxed beef across USDA Prime, Choice, Select, ground beef and export products.

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Herb Schnitker,
beef producer,
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most important thing I inherited.”

Middleton was seven when his grandfather died so most of what he knows about him as a man came from stories told to him by his dad. Born in 1878, Charles Singleton Middleton was raised near Bunkie, Louisiana. His father was a sugar cane farmer.

The younger Middleton didn’t want to have anything to do with farming, so in 1895 at the tender age of 18, he told his parents he was going to West Texas to be in the cattle business. He took off horseback with a bedroll, a cast iron skillet and a couple of changes of clothing. One of the stops made along the way was at Marlin, Texas, near Waco. It was here that he met Mollie Fiser. He told the young lady that he was on his way to a ranch job in Albany but that he would be back for her.

Middleton worked on the ranch at Albany for a time but eventually, he moved on, this time to Lubbock, arriving sometime around 1898. As promised, Middleton went back to get the woman whom he promised to make his bride. They married and returned to the South Plains, and it is here that the family roots have grown deep.

When Middleton arrived on the South Plains, Lubbock was in its infancy having been established five years earlier. Soon after his arrival, the town council nominated Middleton to be the first Chief of Police of Lubbock by unanimous vote. He agreed to take the job though made it clear that he was there to ranch and trade cattle and that this was to be only a brief appointment. For his efforts, he received \$40 per month though he had to furnish his own horse.

It wasn’t long after arriving to Lubbock that Middleton became acquainted with the Ellwood family. Isaac Ellwood invented and patented barbed wire and used the proceeds to invest in land. He named his holdings the Spade Ranch.

Part of Ellwood’s holdings included 300-some sections just west of Lubbock. He began leasing some of the ranchland to young Middleton. He also leased a ranch from Dora Roberts at Big Spring who later struck oil, became a philanthropist and gave lots of her money away to several surrounding West Texas communities for various projects.

Middleton was making his way by buying and trading cattle on commission. Over time, he established relationships with ranchers over much of West Texas and through them established connections with feeders in the Corn Belt. He shipped a lot of cattle to Kansas and Nebraska by rail. His grandfather also did a lot of cattle business in old Mexico. They’d contract those cattle in the summer and take delivery on them in the fall often shipping them to feeders in Kansas and Nebraska. Others went to Arizona.

Being in that line of work, he also heard about land being for sale, and so he transitioned into

selling land as well. When a son was born, Middleton got outvoted on the name for his son. On the birth certificate, it was Lee Fiser Middleton. In school, he was known as Fiser, but to his father and his father’s friends, he was always Sam.

When father and son partnered up in business, they were in the cattle business, the cattle commission business and the ranch real estate business, but early on they were more cattle than land, says Middleton. Then when the auction markets began dotting the landscape and the country cattle trades became less and less, Middleton and Son began to focus more on the land side of the equation.

Even in the early 1970s, when Sam started in the family business, his father was still doing a number of cattle trades simply because he enjoyed it.

Young Sam started driving and opening gates for his dad when he was in his early 20s. He admits then he really had no interest in the business, but he began to meet people and he felt something of an obligation to give the family business a try. When he married, he promised Patricia that he wouldn’t be consumed with selling ranches, that he would make time for other things. Selling land has been his life, their life, now for 51 years of marriage.

Middleton made his first good lick in 1972. It was a really good year for the cotton farmers around Lubbock. They’d brought in a big crop and the cotton brought a good price.

Spade Ranch decided to sell 7000 acres of farm ground right west of Lubbock. The plan was to sell it in quarter sections. Because of the longstanding relationship that the two families had, Sam’s dad got the listing, and he brought Sam in on the deal.

“He’d point out the little things to me like this one had a chalky hill, for example, and he’d explain to me why this one was priced this way and another this way,” says Middleton.

Because of the historic nature of the Spade Ranch, and the fact that the farmers had money that fall, it took no time to sell those quarter-section blocks. Back then, the commission was always split 50-50 between his dad and his salesman.

On the Spade farm deal, the boss decided that the new hire, his son, was to get 25 percent of the commission since he was so green. When they sold the last quarter section four or five months later, young Middleton was hooked.

“I remember I made \$90,000,” says Middleton. “That was a big deal and a lot of money for a 24-year-old.”

On further schooling from his father, he was advised to spend the money to begin buying into the company.

“It was the best thing I ever did.”

Another of those early relationships was with Bryant Edwards who brought the first Hereford cattle to Clay County in North Texas. In fact, many

The younger Middleton didn’t want to have anything to do with farming, so in 1895 at the tender age of 18, he told his parents he was going to West Texas to be in the cattle business. He took off on horseback with a bedroll, a cast iron skillet and a couple of changes of clothing.

thought he had the best horned Herefords in the country.

Edwards had a ranch in the Panhandle that was originally part of the JA which he listed with Middleton’s dad. Once the ranch went under contract, the ranch broker in training was sent with the surveyor to “drag the chain” and learn how it was all done.

Back then the unit of measurement used was a vara. One vara is 33.3 inches.

“We’d start down a fence line and go 100 varas and then put a little flag and on and on up and down through these canyons we went,” says Middleton. “I’ve often wondered how accurate all that was, but it’s all we had then. Today, everything is done by GPS and lasers.”

In all, it was another good lesson in the educational process of becoming a ranch broker.

“I’m still getting educated,” Middleton insists.

It was early in the training process that his dad also advised that he needed a sideline business because the sales side could be hot and cold. His dad rode through those rough times by

doing cattle trades. He was also in the mortgage business. In fact, at one point he had over 600 farm and ranch loans on the books.

For the younger Sam, that sideline became the farm and ranch appraisal business. He attended different appraisal schools and became an Accredited Rural Appraiser. Today he’s licensed as an ARA and State Certified Appraiser for Texas, New Mexico and Colorado. Ninety percent of the appraisal work the company does is estate appraisal.

“The appraisal business has probably been the key to whatever success I’ve had because it put my foot in the door on a lot of ranch transactions,” he says.

The toughest time he ever

went through was the savings and loan crisis during the 1980s recession.

“It was about four years of tough times.”

He got through it by doing appraisal work. Then when the bankruptcy process was complete and the bank had the property on the books, they’d call Middleton to get the property sold. Because there was so much land being dumped, the land market was particularly depressed.

“Land prices literally dropped 50 percent,” Middleton says.

During those days, if he got a phone call to come look at a property, he never rushed right out the door.

“I did not want to waste the gas to drive there,” Middleton recalls. “It was that bad. There were simply no buyers.”

Thankfully, Middleton has not had to relive that kind of experience. During the 2007 recession, he figures prices dropped 10 percent, but there were few foreclosures. These days many buyers come into the

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meat inspectors, and others who ensure the wellbeing of the U.S. cattle herd and the safety of our food supply. The swift detection of this case proves that the systems and protocols we have put in place are working.

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From the Publisher... Jon Angell

What a hectic month since we last got together! I had so many plans for this growing season. However, this season had other plans that haven’t complemented my plans at all. Every year seems has new challenges for us.

All the chaos around me and the challenges we are all facing reminds me of a quote from one of my favorite authors and thinkers; Thomas Sowell.

As I write, we are heading into the Memorial Day weekend and this issue proceeds one of my favorite national holidays, Independence Day. America is still the greatest country ever! Yes, we have challenges but they all come with opportunity and for now some freedom to choose our own path. Which brings me to the first quote:

“The freedom of America is the freedom to live your own life and take your own chances.” -- Thomas Sowell.

I like the way Thomas Jefferson referred to this idea as “The Pursuit of Happiness.” Too many people take for granted the freedoms and the benefits of this country. We have done a poor job of protecting and nurturing what the founders gave to us. We allowed corruption to flourish. We raised a couple of generations filled with too many actively tearing down at our society, common culture, institutions and maybe most importantly; rule of law.

How much longer will we be allowed to live our lives and take our own chances? I don’t like the direction we are heading. And from many of your comments I know many of you feel the same way.

Up front for the feature we have picked one that runs long. From reader feedback, I know a fair amount of you like the shorter columns, news and features. Don’t let the length discourage you. Often the gems of interest are dispersed throughout a long article.

We have a lot to offer in this issue... My thoughts for this month are uncomfortably brief. We had to move print day up because of Memorial Day, losing two and a half days I thought I had to work on this issue. This of

course was right at hay baling time. As many of you will understand, especially with the challenge of this year following last year’s feed challenges, I made hay. Which reminds me of another quote....

“There are no solutions. There are only trade-offs.” – Thomas Sowell

Lucky for me, we have important breaking news I am happy to share on my page, so the space will not be wasted because of my hay making time trade-off. As always thanks for reading and your continued support.

Supreme Court strikes down Biden WOTUS regulation

In a 5-4 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court has limited the scope of the Clean Water Act, and effectively ended a multi-month standoff between the White House and various levels of government over WOTUS regulations.

The case, Sackett v. EPA, concerned the Idaho property of Michael and Chantell Sackett, who in 2007 backfilled their lot with dirt to prepare for new home construction. Because the Sackett's property contained a wetland that fed into an intrastate lake – and was thus, according to the EPA, part of "waters of the United States," or WOTUS, regulations – the agency ordered the couple to remove the backfill and restore the site, or face penalties.

The Sacketts sued the EPA, and although the Ninth Circuit sided with the agency (and ruled that the Clean Water Act covers wetlands with an "ecologically significant nexus to traditional navigable waters"), the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case in early 2022, and arguments were given on Oct. 3, 2022.

Writing for the majority, Justice Alito reversed the Ninth Circuit's ruling, and effectively limited the EPA's authority over wetlands. Alito wrote that going forward, the Clean Water Act will cover to "only those 'wetlands with a continuous surface connection to bodies that are waters of the United States in their own right,' so that they are 'indistinguishable' from those waters. ... The wetlands on the Sacketts’ property are distinguishable from any possibly covered waters."

Dissenting opinions

Dissenting were Justices Jackson, Sotomayor, Kagan, and Kavanaugh, with the latter two justices filing separate opinions. In her opinion, Justice Kagan reiterated an earlier critique of the current Supreme Court, and accused it of substituting "its own ideas about policymaking for Congress’s. The Court will not allow the Clean [Water] Act to work as Congress instructed. The Court, rather than Congress, will decide how much regulation is too much."

Justice Kavanaugh, meanwhile, wrote that while he agreed with reversing the Ninth Circuit's ruling, he disagreed with the court's new measure for which wetlands are covered under the Clean Water Act. "In my view," Kavanaugh wrote, "the Court’s 'continuous surface connection' test departs from the statutory text, from 45 years of consistent agency practice, and from this Court’s precedents. The Court’s test narrows the Clean Water Act’s coverage of 'adjacent' wetlands to mean

only 'adjoining' wetlands. But 'adjacent' and 'adjoining' have distinct meanings."

An end to Biden WOTUS regulations

Although Sacketts v. EPA was not specifically argued with recent Biden WOTUS regulations under consideration, the court's ruling effectively ends the controversial policy.

Erected in January of this year, the Biden WOTUS rules expanded the waters and wetlands that the Clean Water Act regulated, and it met stiff opposition from both industry and state governments. In April, a North Dakota federal judge granted a preliminary injunction to halt the rule from taking effect in 24 states, and later that same month, an appeals court granted a Kentucky administrative stay, effectively freezing the rule until May 10.

Congress, meanwhile, passed a resolution to block the regulation, but after President Biden vetoed the law, the legislature was unable to gather the necessary votes to override the veto.

In reaction to the Supreme Court's new ruling, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association released a statement that cattle producers "rejoice" in the result. The NCBA had submitted an amicus brief in the case.

"Cattle producers across the country can breathe a sigh of relief today," said Todd Wilkinson, NCBA president. "Cattle producers have had to retain costly legal services to determine if water features on their property are federally jurisdictional. Today’s Supreme Court opinion refocuses the Clean Water Act on protecting our water resource through regulatory clarity. We look forward to working with the EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as they implement the Court’s new Continuous Surface Connection standard."

– Meatingplace.com





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FARM & FOOD FILE

USDA 2023 forecasts: Colossal crops, measly prices and little backslapping

By ALAN GUEBERT
For The Cattleman's Advocate

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) most recent World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE)

report confirmed that a freight train of grain is barreling toward 2023/24 markets and farmers everywhere need to prepare for the rockier prices sure to follow in its wake.

The report was succinctly summarized by DTN market analysts shortly after its release May 12: "USDA projects farmers are in the midst of planting the country's largest corn crop on record at 15.265 billion bu. (bb) and a record soybean crop at 4.51 bb..."

As every grain market participant knows, the double corn/soybean production record is a double-edged sword because the records will lead to larger, price-flattening carryovers. Again, per DTN: The huge crops mean "2023/24 'new crop' ending stocks for corn (are) projected at 2.22 bb and soybeans pegged at 335 million bushels (mb)."

The corn carryover is 805 mb higher, or 68 percent, than the 2022 carryover and the soybean carryover is 119 mb higher, or 55 percent larger.

The projected corn crop, which USDA forecasts will top 2016's record 15.1 bb, will slap the coming year's average price down to \$4.80 per bu., a profit-clipping \$1.80 below this year's average price.

Likewise, this year's likely record soybean crop means its projected average price will slide

The projected corn crop, which USDA forecasts will top 2016's record 15.1 bb, will slap the coming year's average price down to \$4.80 per bu., a profit-clipping \$1.80 below this year's average price.

from \$14.20 per bushel to \$12.10, or \$2.10 per bu.

While \$1.80 per bu. lower for corn and \$2.10 per bu. lower for beans sound modest, the declines—taken across the record production for both crops—mean a chunky, multi-billion drop in gross U.S. corn income and a smaller but still substantial drop in gross U.S. soybean revenue.

And that's if either or both projected record crops hit their forecasted targets. If good weather boosts either crop's final production—a hard number not known until November—carry-over will climb even higher, average prices will fall, and farm income will slip even lower.

In the middle of all this good-news-is-really-bad-news data for U.S. corn and soybeans farmers, American wheat farmers couldn't tell if their section of the WASDE was a pat on the back or a kick in the pants—a distance, the all-but-sainted former USDA chief Earl Butz liked to remind audiences, "is only 18 inches apart."

The headline to the wheat forecast, Bloomberg blared, was that "America's wheat fields have become so plagued by drought that farmers are now poised to abandon crops at the highest rate in more than a century."

In fact, the news service went on, "Producers are expected to harvest about 67% of their planted acres... (that) if realized would be the lowest ratio since 1917..."

So, the shorter U.S. crop means taller U.S. prices, right?

Bloomberg said that's a rock solid, ah, well... maybe: The acreage abandonment "to lower levels than analysts were expecting... could keep domestic

prices elevated, even with rival producers such as Canada and Argentina likely to boost output."

USDA's wheat price projection, however, did not agree. Indeed, government forecasts didn't say "could" at all. Instead, drought or no drought, the WASDE pegged 2023/24 wheat prices at \$8 per bu., or 85-cents lower than last year's average price.

Which just goes to show the world why America's farmers continue their more than a generation-long love/hate relationship with wheat: they just can't catch a break with it.

For example, strong 2022 prices—buoyed by both lower U.S. acres and the Ukrainian/Russia war—encouraged hesitant growers to sow 10 percent more wheat this marketing year. Last summer's drought, however, continued into winter, then spring, to deliver—holy cow—record acreage abandonment, normally a booster rocket for prices.

But, no, Chicago July wheat futures continue their sleepy, slow slide. On Dec. 30 July futures closed at \$8.03. By mid-May, though, the July contract had slipped below \$6.50 per bu. and now has the grease to slide more.

Given 2023's soaring production-sinking price forecast, maybe Old Earl the Pearl had it right with his back patting-back side kicking wisecrack.

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Focus shifts to boost efficiency, lower costs, Tyson CEO says

Tyson Foods Inc. is looking "at everything" in an effort to respond to a weak protein market and to improve operating efficiencies in the wake of a surprise operating loss and net loss in the second quarter.

"We're looking across the enterprise to evaluate (operational excellence) and reduce the number of inefficient operations," Tyson President and CEO Donnie King told attendees at this week's BMO Capital Markets Global Farm to Market Conference in New York. "I think the environment is going to require everyone to be more efficient at what you do," he added.

Earlier this month, Tyson reported an operating loss of \$49 million and a net loss of \$91 million in the second quarter of fiscal 2023, prompting the protein giant to lower its sales guidance for the year to between \$53 billion and \$54 billion from between \$55 billion and \$57 bil-

lion. The company also noted that margins fell to their lowest point in two decades.

"This is the first time I've seen chicken, beef and pork all challenged at the same time," King told the BMO Conference audience. "And based on everybody I talked to, no one remembers a time when that's happened since we've had chicken, beef and pork. So, we're navigating that. Like every other cycle that's out there, you always come out stronger than you go in, you come out faster and more agile."

In April, Tyson announced that it will cut its senior leadership ranks by 15% and its corporate staff by 10%, and this year continued the consolidation of some of its corporate offices to Arkansas as announced in 2022. These moves are aimed to help the company reach a goal of saving \$1 billion in operating costs as Tyson outlined in 2021.

—Meatingplace.com

Here are the scheduled advertising deadlines for The Cattleman's Advocate through February 2024:

July issue Ad deadline: June 20
August issue Ad deadline: July 25
September issue Ad deadline: August 22
October issue Ad deadline: September 26
November issue Ad deadline: October 24
December issue ... Ad deadline: November 28
January issue Ad deadline: December 26
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From Our Side of the Fence

By JUSTIN ANGELL
EMCC Owner/Partner

Missouri weather never ceases to amaze. We've gone from the driest April anyone I know can ever remember to an explosion of wet spring after most areas got almost 3 inches of rain. Now, with a 10-day forecast of sunshine, the haymakers are out in full force.

We all know that two or 3 inches of rain is a reprieve, but not a solution to such a dry start. Although rainfall varied across the entire Midwest, it has been enough to absolutely devastate the corn and soybean futures markets this week. The feeder cattle board has had the opposite reaction with feeder cattle in the ring and the paper feeder cattle in Chicago, both soaring higher.

What concerns me the most is the fact that for the first time in my life, it looks to me like 80% of the corn belt got planted in less than a 10-day window, so my fear is that assuming a large percentage of that corn will be pollinating in the same 10 days, the wrong kind of hot dry 10 days

could be a disaster for the nation's corn crop. But like a lot of things in our life, there's no use worrying about something we cannot control and frankly probably won't happen.

Not only has the feeder market shot up, last Friday is probably the highest average kill cow market we have ever had in our 23-year history in Bowling Green. The market was good and quality was great with hardly any shelly low yielding cows. It seemed like I started more cows at a dollar or more than I did under a dollar. Good bulls sell by the pound were all much higher, most in the \$1.20+ region, the top bull was the Knox bull at \$1.41.

The following bred cow and pair sale was a little different story. It had an overall weaker tone. Although the good cows sold relatively well, there were no sales that I thought were outstanding. This weaker undertone was just a hangover from such a dry April.

Feed lot country has a bifurcated market again with western Kansas fed cattle bringing \$1.60



with northern plains, higher quality cattle bringing \$1.77 to \$1.85. Our fat cattle market has excelled in the last three months in both price, quantity and quality. we have sold over 100 head of fed cattle every week except one for the last 2 1/2 months or more. The top on a really good set of Illinois Fat Cattle from Browns this week was \$1.83 1/2.

Whenever I make predictions or give quasi advice about marketing cattle, I make sure it's crystal clear that everybody knows that I don't know any

more than anyone else. Since I wrote the first part of this article, I've talked to contacts in Kansas, South Dakota and Nebraska and I have come to the conclusion that, we may be set up for a terribly dry year.

My friend in eastern Nebraska told me it is drier there than anyone can ever remember and that by the end of the week, any corn not under a pivot will be dead. A dry Eastern Nebraska is a lot different than a dry western Kansas. If that extra dry weather slips further east into Iowa I believe corn prices are spring loaded. If that spring trips, the cattle market will be on a pulley and as high as it is, it can go straight down like it's 2015 again.

So, my advice is, if you have

cattle big enough and ready to sell, ring the register and get them sold. If I'm wrong and general rains fall all through June and July and we have a record corn crop, that's OK too because everything we raise and own will be worth more.

While I'm sticking my neck out predicting markets... cows are going to get substantially higher if we keep getting rains and start retaining cows again. This will stay true unless dry weather forces too many to town like in April. I lean toward the likelihood of a drier June, July and August. So ring the register with the opens and ol'girls sooner than later. You don't want this good weigh-up market to get away from you.

Taco Bell, Cargill join to reduce climate impact of beef

Taco Bell Corp. is joining longtime beef supplier Cargill in committing \$2 million to reduce the climate impact of one of its most popular ingredients.

The federal government will match the funds "for a combined total of \$4 million in new grants over the next four years," according to the company.

"This partnership will support beef producers with technical and financial tools to expand their regenerative reaching practices, from conserving grassland ecosystems to improving river water quality and biodiversity," the quick-service-restaurant operator said Tuesday in a news release.

Organizations engaged in regenerative agricultural prac-

tices across the Intermountain West have until Aug. 3 to submit applications, with projects starting in 2024.

The efforts are expected to sequester up to 44,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year in 2030.

In collaboration with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the announcement is in keeping with a broader effort by parent Yum Brands to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030.

Purchased food in Yum's supply chain is behind more than two-thirds of its emissions, according to the company. Its brands also include KFC, Pizza Hut and the Habit Burger Grill.

— Meatingplace.com

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It's The Pitts...

What were they thinking?

By LEE PITTS
For The Cattleman's Advocate

What were those adventurous vagabonds who came west 150 years ago thinking when in just the first 400 miles of their journey from the Platte River to Fort Laramie, they saw 12 graves to the mile documented by shallow graves and crosses made from bedposts, wagon boards and double trees? I don't know about you but I'd have given serious consideration to doing a quick about-face and running back home to momma.

How did past generations survive without childproof lids on pill bottles or seatbelts in our vehicles? The teeth marks in the rails of the family crib that was painted with lead based paint are still visible, yet here I am 71 years later and not yet totally demented or deranged. When I think of the busy roads, avenues and streets we darted in and out of on our bikes, not always following our mother's advice to "look both ways," it's a miracle most of us survived. Especially when you consider that our miniature and not fully developed brains weren't cushioned, insulated and sheltered from our own stupidity by the now-mandated hard hats.

Was a life just worth less a couple centuries ago when mothers often gave birth to a dozen or so kids knowing that several of them would die before they reached the age of five from eating lye, falling down wells or from scarlet fever, smallpox, polio, the grip, dropsy, or other diseases that no longer strike fear

I wonder what it was like in the old west to order up a bride from a catalog not knowing what would step out of the stagecoach? And what did the women think when they ended up with a toothless, alcoholic loser?

in households? Were mothers having 'extra kids' or 'spares' to insure there'd be enough help during harvest, or was their loss just considered 'shrink', as if kids were a steer on the hoof? Did mothers love their kids any less than they do now?

What the black slaves were thinking when they were put on the auction block and sold like they were cattle or swine. And how did one man ever get it in his head that he had the right to 'own' another human being? (Even American Indians owned slaves.)

What were those brave young men thinking when they stormed the beaches of Normandy and saw their fellow soldiers being mowed down in front of them? Were they simply better men than we? And what were American grunts on the ground in Vietnam thinking as they got sprayed by their own planes with cancer-causing Agent Orange and then came home to an ungrateful nation?

I wonder what it was like in the old west to order up a bride from a catalog not knowing what would step out of the stagecoach? And what did the women think when they ended up with a toothless, alcoholic loser? I suppose it's no different than having an Internet relationship nowadays. Still...

What was my mom thinking when she got my brother and I a chemistry set for Christmas that had dozens of small bottles filled with dangerous chemicals,

including acids that I used to etch the number of my Cub Scout troop on my mom's favorite furniture? Did the very remote possibility of having your child become the next Marie Curie, Alfred Nobel or Louis Pasteur outweigh the higher probability of having your house blow up because you're rug rats accidentally built a bomb?

After John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth did it make every simple Sunday drive that followed seem rather mundane? Did a speech writer back home at NASA write Neil Armstrong's now-famous soliloquy when he stepped on the lunar surface for the first time and called it, "One small step for man?" And where did Alan Shepard get the golf club he used to hit a golf ball farther than anyone had ever hit one before? Did he yell "fore"?

What was the 'risk versus reward' ratio when the first man ever hopped on the back of a bull to ride him; what makes a person want to drive 300 miles per hour; and why did those in charge of building the Golden Gate Bridge wait until 23 men had fallen to their death before they thought to put up a net to catch them?

Did we discount the value of human life in the past; were lives just worth less? The answer lies in a newspaper headline from long ago that reported on the loss of life in an accident as, "fatal but not serious."

– www.LeePittsbooks.com

Cattlemen's Heritage plans beef packing plant near Nebraska-Iowa border

Cattlemen's Heritage has announced plans for a new carbon-neutral beef packing plant.

The new plant, to be located on 132-acres near the Nebraska-Iowa border, will process 2,000 head of cattle per day. The company expects to break ground late summer-early fall 2023.

The plant will employ as many as 800 people working a single shift, and it will have an on-site daycare, a bank for cash-

ing paychecks and medical center, according to local news reports.

Legacy Beef Co-op will be the exclusive cattle provider for the processing plant and members will share in the processing plant's profitability. Legacy is currently seeking farmers who'd like to join the co-op.

"This is a forward-thinking

way for cattlemen to better control their destiny," said Joe Kerns, president of Partners for Production Agriculture. "The cattlemen's share of the retail beef dollar has dropped from 63% to 37% since 2014. Participating in Legacy Beef Co-op allows a cattleman a new way toward sustainable income."

– Meatingplace.com

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Animal Health Bill proposal wins support from meat industry groups

Two industry associations are voicing their support for a bipartisan proposal designed to reauthorize animal disease prevention and management programs.

The Foreign Animal Disease Prevention, Surveillance and Rapid Response Act of 2023 aims to provide additional funding for three animal health programs established through the 2019 Farm Bill and currently managed by USDA. The bill was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), John Cornyn (R-TX) and Joni Ernst (R-IA) and in the House by Reps. Ronny Jackson (R-TX), Angie Craig (D-MN), Jim Costa (D-CA), Don Bacon (R-NE), and Don Davis (D-NC).

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is endorsing the proposal in light of the potential of U.S. animals becoming infected. "The threat of a foreign animal disease outbreak in the United States represents an existential threat to every cattle producer," said NCBA President Todd Wilkinson, a South Dakota cattle producer. "It would also threaten this nation's food and national security. We must act now to ensure we are prepared to combat a potential crisis before it happens," he added.

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) voiced similar support for the legislation, which also would protect the nation's food supply. "With threats of African swine fever and other foreign animal diseases to livestock and poultry industries, having these provisions in the farm bill will ensure the U.S. remains positioned to deliver safe and affordable food to consumers worldwide," said NPPC President and Missouri pork producer Scott Hays.

H.R. 3419 and S.1666 this week were referred to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry for further action by Congress.

– Meatingplace.com

The 'Wienermobile' is no more

The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile is being renamed for the first time in nearly 100 years to help promote an all-beef version of the company's famous links.

The Wienermobile will be known as the "Frankmobile" as it winds its way through the nation's highways this summer, the division of Kraft Heinz Co. announced in a news release. The fleet of six vehicles featuring the Frankmobile design that spotlights Oscar Mayer's 100%

All Beef Franks will hit the road this week. Besides distributing Frank Whistles – a successor to the traditional Wiener Whistles – the renamed Frankfurters who operate the vehicle also will hand out coupons for a free pack of the beef hot dogs to individuals named any iteration of the name "Frank," the release added.

Oscar Mayer says the name change is the first for the promotional vehicle since its debut in 1936.

– Meatingplace.com

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– Ken Burch,
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U.S. ups tariff on Japanese beef imports

U.S. beef imports exceeding an international quota has triggered a higher tariff on imports of Japanese beef, the Meat Import Council of America (MICA) confirmed.

The U.S. raised its tariff on imports of Japanese beef to 26.4% after the “Other Countries” beef quota was filled for 2023, largely on a surge from Brazil. Within the quota, at 65,005 tons per year, Japan can export beef at 4.4 cents per kilogram.

In addition to Brazil and Japan, the quota is primarily accessed by the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and Namibia. It is used by any country in the World Trade Organization that does not have a country-specific quota, or quota through a subsequent trade agreement.

Prior to passage of the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement in 2020, Japan had its own tariff-rate quota (TRQ) of 200 tons. However, as part of the USJTA, Japan petitioned for access to the

“Other Countries” TRQ in exchange for ceding its own TRQ.

Countries with their own quotas are Argentina, Uruguay, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, and the Central American countries under CAFTA-DR.

This is the third year in a row that the “Other Countries” quota has filled, largely due to Brazil’s access to the quota beginning in 2021, according to MICA.

– Meatingplace.com

Mowing hay low may you cost time and money

GALENA, Mo. – There are many reasons to avoid cutting low when mowing hay, but money is the main one, says University of Missouri Extension agronomist Tim Schnakenberg.

Schnakenberg recommends a height of 4 inches for cool-season grasses like tall fescue, brome grass, orchard grass and timothy and 8 inches for native warm-season grasses. Typically, legumes such as alfalfa and clover may be cut lower. It is important to cut cool-season grasses before seed heads develop, if weather permits.

Too often, the first cut of hay is too low, he says. That sets the stage for this season’s growth and beyond. Hay mowed too low likely will result in thin stands over time. Low-mowed pastures may need renovation or planting, resulting in extra expense.

When you cut too low, you’re getting the worst of the plant because the lowest-quality forage is at the base of the plant, Schnakenberg says. The lowest 2 inches also contains the most endophytes, putting livestock at risk in toxic Kentucky 31 fescue fields.

There is an estimated 100-150

pounds of forage per acre-inch near the base of the plant. Lowering a cutter from 4 inches to 2 inches only gains about 200-300 pounds more forage in the bale. “As a result, there is only a small amount of gain in tonnage, but it comes at a significant price,” he says.

Mowing low also puts your equipment at risk. Blades are more likely to come into contact with soil, gravel and rocks. This leads to more grit and dirt in the hay, which lowers digestibility and intake by the animals. “Mowers were never intended to be a ground contact tool,” Schnakenberg says.

Plants need residual leaves to absorb the sun. When leaf-to-stem ratio is too low, plants must rely on their root systems for regrowth. When leaves are cut too short and too often, roots die back because there is not enough photosynthesis to feed them. Strong root systems are especially important during dry periods. Also, when too much of the canopy is removed, more soil and the crown of the plant are exposed to the sun.

Scalping forages can push back regrowth two weeks. “This is a two-week loss of the growing sea-

son,” Schakenberg says.

Low cutting also is a missed opportunity for better hay drying. Forage laid out on high stubble receives better air circulation below the windrows instead of direct contact with moist soil.

Cutting hay is not without its drawbacks, but they are few, says Schnakenberg. There might be minor tonnage losses, and mowing equipment may not work as well and leave behind a tattered field.

A common question is how to cut a crop high with modern hay cutting equipment. “There is no doubt we have much better technology than ever before in harvesting equipment, and speed of harvest has been the greatest advantage compared to prior generations of equipment,” he says. “Hay producers should consider setting up skid shoes on disc mowers. These could be fabricated if necessary. Hydraulic cylinder stops are also a possibility on some equipment.”

For more information, see the MU Extension publication “Making and Storing Hay” at www.extension.missouri.edu/g4575 or consult your local MU Extension agronomist.

Michigan meat processors fight state wastewater rules

Small and mid-sized Michigan meat processors fighting the state’s updated wastewater permit for slaughterhouses in court have proposed a compromise settlement aiming to reduce costs related to achieving compliance.

The Michigan Meat Association (MMA) filed suit after the state’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) in late October published an updated wastewater general permit for slaughterhouses to be in effect Nov. 1, 2022, through Nov. 27, 2027. MMA contends EGLE overstepped its authority in developing new discharge criteria for meat processing and slaughter plants.

In a blog, Chloe Merindorf, MMA’s executive secretary, outlined the organization’s top four concerns:

- Reducing the discharge concentration for Total Inorganic Nitrogen (TIN) from 35 mg/L to 10 mg/L;
- Establishing a phosphorus discharge limit to be determined based on the proximity of the receiving crop land to surface water bodies;
- Establishing Bio-Chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD5) limits; and
- Establishing NO2 limit (when

using a rapid infiltration basis or aboveground slow-rate land application for final disposal).

“Every new task set forth by EGLE’s revisions results in additional expenses to the business – beyond the treatment system upgrades themselves,” Merindorf said, noting that outside consultants would need to provide services that cannot be expensed from current profit margins.

MMA recently submitted a compromise settlement proposal to EGLE seeking to enhance the current standards, reduce processors’ financial requirements and avoid further court costs.

None of the current general permit holders can presently comply with the suggested updates, Merindorf said. The average start-up expenses to meet the updates required per the proposed guidelines in MMA’s settlement submission will be \$150,000 per processor, she noted.

Without such compromise, MMA believes more processors will close their businesses because they cannot afford to meet the current requirements. One processor already has done so.

Meanwhile, the EPA also is reviewing the federal standard of wastewater management systems

for meat processors and slaughterhouses. The outcome of the Michigan lawsuit could influence how other states proceed.

– Meatingplace.com

House Republicans: USDA can ‘do more with less’

A House subcommittee on Thursday voted along party lines in approving a USDA spending bill that would yank \$6 billion for clean energy and farm loan forgiveness.

The measure would also halt efforts on fair play rules in live-stock marketing and curtail Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack’s ability to tap into a \$30 billion reserve being used to fund a climate-smart agriculture initiative, reports Chuck Abbott, editor of FERN’s Ag Insider.

“Some tough decisions have to be made,” said Rep. Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., chair of the subcommittee overseeing USDA and FDA spending. “This bill takes the same approach American families take every day — they have to do more with less under the Biden economy.”

House Agriculture Committee ranking member Rep. David Scott, D-Ga., issued a statement calling the Republican proposal to slash over \$6.25 billion from Agriculture Committee funds “a direct assault on rural communities across America.”

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to take up the bill as soon as this week. It includes \$17.2 billion for discretionary spending by the USDA, substantially below the \$36.8 billion requested by the White House.

The Biden administration has proposed a combined \$228 billion in USDA spending in fiscal 2024.

– Meatingplace.com

The bad, the good, and the up slightly; Q1 meat trade report

Beef exports faltered, pork exports rose and broiler exports increase somewhat for the first quarter of 2023, compared with the year-earlier results, according to USDA trade data analyzed by the analysts of the Daily Livestock Report.

Beef exports totaled 779.0 million pounds for the first quarter of the year, down 7.9% or 66.7 million lbs from the same period last year. Shipments to Japan rose 0.2% over the quarter, to 186.4 million lbs., while those to Mexico saw a 17.8% increase, 77.6 million lbs.

The increases were more than offset, analysts noted, by double-digit declines in beef exports to South Korea (down 16%), China (down 4.4%), Canada (down 11.8%) and Taiwan (down 19.8%).

Meanwhile, first quarter pork exports increased 127.5 million lbs or 8.3% over the same period last year, to nearly

1.74 billion lbs. Increases were seen to the top five destinations for U.S. pork, with Mexico registering a record first quarter level of 632.2 million lbs, up 4.9% from the same period last year.

Pork exports to Canada increased 11.2% to 140.2 million pounds while exports to China grew 19.6% to 146.6 million lbs. Shipments to Japan and South Korea increased 0.8% and 3.5%, respectively, to 278.6 million and 138.6 million lbs.

Finally, total broiler exports increased slightly by 2.5% to nearly 1.9 million lbs. during the first quarter of the year. Exports to Mexico grew 15.1%, to 406.7 million lbs., along with a 10.9% increase to Taiwan totaling 147.1 million lbs for the first quarter. Decreases were seen to Cuba (-11.3%), China (-14.1%) and Canada (-18.3%).

– Meatingplace.com

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Livestock News & Notes.....

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Bill moves to governor's desk

A top priority for the Missouri Cattlemen's Association was legislation intended to reduce obstacles for beginning farmers and ranchers. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Dane Diehl (R-125), Sen. Denny Hoskins (R-21) and Sen. John Rizzo (D-11), was included in an omnibus bill, SB 138, along with several other agricultural provisions. The bill, led by Sen. Karla Eslinger (R-33), passed the Missouri Senate by a 28-6 bipartisan vote Thursday, May 11. This was the final legislative hurdle for the legislation after passing the Missouri House 136-19 earlier in the week. The legislation was handled in the House by Rep. Hannah Kelly (R-141). SB 138 now moves to Governor Mike Parson's desk.

The effort to begin initiatives in the state focusing on beginning farmers and ranchers is nothing new to MCA, according to MCA President David Dick. The association led legislation eight years ago, but the legislation did not advance into law. Nearly a decade later, elected leaders of both parties rallied in support of addressing one of the biggest problems facing Missouri agriculture, according to Dick.

"The average age of a farmer or rancher is nearing 60 years old and less than five percent are 35 years old or younger," said Dick. "If we do not repopulate the land with the next generation, I cannot even begin to describe the woes for our industry and our consumers."

The bill authorizes an income tax exemption for a percentage of capital gains of up to \$6 million per year received by a taxpayer who sells all or a portion of his or her farmland to a beginning farmer. The income tax exemption also applies to cash rent income of up to \$25,000 per year received by a landowner who leases to a beginning farmer or rancher. Additionally, this bill adds to the definition of "business income," for the purposes of deducting a percentage from a taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income the total combined profit reported to the Internal Revenue Service on each Schedule F and each Form 4835 filed. The bill also requires the Department of Revenue to report annually to the House of Representative and the Senate regarding the cost and benefits of this initiative.

Dick said the legislation isn't going to "magically" fix the issue, but said it is a good start that should assist aspiring beginning farmers and ranchers struggling to start.

"This bill is a huge victory and we encourage Governor Parson to sign it without delay. The work of our elected leaders on this legislation should not be taken for granted."

— Missouri Cattlemen's Prime Cuts

House Ag appropriations contains funds for EID Tags

This week, the House Appropriations Committee released and held a markup of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies bill.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Animal Health Technical Services line item was allocated \$49,683,000. This is a 10 million increase over last year. This increase is meant to help fund electronic identification (EID) tags and infrastructure to avoid producers and auctions bearing this burden.

LMA policy demands USDA fully fund readers at livestock auctions as infrastructure. LMA also requires USDA fund the cost of tags, tag application, data collection, and data management if EID tags are required.

This increase is impressive considering the overall bill included spending cuts.

—LMA News

Charlie Stenholm, Democratic architect of farm policy, dies at 84

Former Rep. Charles W. Stenholm, a conservative Texas Democrat who was a leading architect of agricultural policy in the late 20th century, died suddenly Wednesday at his home in Granbury, Texas. He was 84.

Stenholm, who was also a leading advocate of a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget, represented a large swath of west Texas for 26 years before he was defeated in 2004 as the result of a GOP redistricting plan.

Stenholm's congressional career was marked by his passionate advocacy of modern farm production and a firm conservative belief in limiting the growth of government spending. He had a major role in shaping and passing every farm bill during his 13 terms in Congress between 1979 and 2005.

—LMA News

JBS teams with union to launch in-house sanitation service

JBS USA partnered with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) to create a full-service food safety and food plant sanitation company that will provide in-house sanitation services for JBS USA and Pilgrim's Pride facilities.

The news comes as JBS USA terminated its contract with Packers Sanitation Services Inc. after a federal investigation revealed more than 100 children were working for the cleaning company.

JBS USA will immediately begin the transition of 10 facili-

ties to JBS Sanitation, with additional facilities expected to follow suit if third-party service prov

McDonald's franchisees fined for employing 305 minors

The Department of Labor has levied heavy fines on three McDonald's franchisees for employing more than 300 minors – including 10-year-olds.

According to a report from the department, the franchisees operate 62 McDonald's restaurants in Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland and Ohio, and altogether they employed 305 minors, including two 10-year-old workers at a Louisville McDonald's restaurant.

For the violations, \$212,544 in civil money penalties were levied against the employers.

"Too often, employers fail to follow the child labor laws that protect young workers," stated Wage and Hour Division District Director Karen Garnett-Civils in Louisville. "Under no circumstances should there ever be a 10-year-old child working in a fast-food kitchen around hot grills, ovens and deep fryers."

A persistent problem

The McDonald's developments are just the latest in a string of child labor violation in the U.S.

In February, the Department of Labor fined Packers Sanitation Services Inc. \$1.5 million for employing more than 100 children in its cleaning of meat processing plants. In response, Cargill and other large processors canceled their PSSI contracts, and JBS not only canceled its contract, but also launched an in-house service with the UFCW.

Additionally, in March, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry accused the Tony Downs Food Company of employing at least eight children between the ages of 14 and 17 in its processing facility. Tony Downs is cooperating with the investigation.

USDA boosts aid for farmers at risk with \$130M infusion

USDA announced it will make an additional \$130 million in automatic financial assistance available to qualifying farm loan program borrowers who are facing financial risk, the agency said this week.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) this month will begin accepting and reviewing distressed borrower assistance requests from direct loan recipients who missed a recent installment or who cannot make the next scheduled installment, FSA said in a news release. The latest assistance plan is part of the \$3.1 billion aimed at helping distressed farm loan borrowers through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, the agency said. All

qualified borrowers should have received a letter outlining the process for accessing the assistance even before they become delinquent, FSA added.

"Our goal is to make sure we provide producers access to the tools they need to help get back to a financially viable path and ultimately succeed as thriving agricultural businesses," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack noted in the release.

Senators revive act aimed to allow interstate meat sales

Two senators are trying to revive a bill that aims to allow small-scale livestock and poultry producers greater access to consumers across the U.S.

Senators Roger Marshall (R-KS) and Peter Welch (D-VT) introduced the bipartisan bill.

The proposed legislation, called the Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions Act (DIRECT), would create a narrow exemption for small producers and butchers, providing more flexibility for interstate sales without compromising food safety or jeopardizing international trade market access. The DIRECT Act would allow processors, butchers or other retailers to sell normal retail quantities of state-inspected meat online to consumers across state lines.

The bill would not allow custom exempt processors to ship meat in interstate commerce, and it explicitly prohibits the export of state-inspected product.

Proponents of the bill believe that it will help small meat and poultry producers find new markets, keep their businesses thriving and provide more options for consumers while ensuring that food safety remains the top priority.

A similar bill of the same name was introduced in 2021.

Consumers don't put lessons into action, study finds

The adage, "old habits die hard," takes on special significance when those old habits threaten food safety. But even when consumers know better — when they are educated in food safe practices — their behavior changes little.

So found researchers in Australia, evaluate the effectiveness of a mass media food safety campaign on Aussie consumers.

The Western Australian Department of Health launched the "Play it Food Safe" media campaign and was "shown to have some effectiveness in improving safe food-handling behavior among consumers following the campaign," wrote researchers from Curtin University in Western Australia and the WA Department of Health.

However, 689 study participants who saw the campaign's communications elements, and then were evaluated about eight weeks later on their food safety knowledge and food-safe habits, had stubbornly stuck (or returned) to the actions they were used to doing regardless of effect on food safety. This, despite demonstrating that they had learned more about what constitutes food safety through the campaign.

The results of the study are published in the July 2023 edition of Food Control journal, in an article titled, "Examining the long-term effects of a safe food-handling media campaign."

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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MU Extension to partner on 5-state regional food business center

COLUMBIA, Mo. – The University of Missouri, through MU Extension, will partner with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on a \$25 million award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create the Heartland Regional Food Business Center, which will foster more vibrant, resilient food systems throughout a five-state region.

Heartland is among 12 regional centers the USDA will establish to serve all areas of the country, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack announced today. Rural Prosperity Nebraska, a University of Nebraska hub that connects Nebraska communities with university faculty, students and other resources, is leading the five-state regional project in cooperation with MU Extension, the MU Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) and 32 other partners.

The project will establish an online platform to strengthen local and regional food systems. It will mobilize existing resources across Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma and a designated tribal trade coalition to accelerate the delivery of resources for agricultural producers and food businesses. Partners and collab-

orators include land-grant universities, nonprofits and tribal and indigenous groups, as well as smaller organizations focused on serving under-resourced groups.

MU Extension will receive \$750,899 and CARES \$250,000 over four years to advance three primary objectives:

Develop a regional asset map to highlight resources available to food businesses and agricultural producers, such as technical assistance, capital, incubator kitchens and distribution channels. CARES will support this effort with mapping, reporting and data visualization tools to identify impacts and opportunities.

Increase collective outreach, technical assistance and extension activities that promote use of these resources, with a focus on under-resourced groups.

Develop a program of sub-awards to accelerate new market opportunities for Missouri producers and food businesses.

"In Missouri, we'll be targeting audiences statewide with an emphasis on reaching under-served producers and food businesses," said Bill McKelvey, senior project coordinator for MU Extension and Heartland Regional Food Business Center lead for Missouri.

"This project will comple-

ment related efforts in Missouri focused on agricultural entrepreneurship, value-added production and increasing partnerships throughout the food system," McKelvey said.

"The multistate collaboration allows partners to aggregate expertise and knowledge," said Alice Roach, senior research associate with the MU Division of Applied Social Sciences and co-principal investigator on the grant. "For farms and food businesses, this means expanded understanding of and access to technical assistance and resources that will help them grow and develop."

Roach said the Heartland Regional Food Business Center aligns with MU Extension's "2xAg2030" goal to double Missouri agriculture's economic impact by 2030 while sustaining natural resources. "When these farms and food businesses do well, their local and regional economies also benefit," she said.

The USDA said the Regional Food Business Centers will serve as cornerstones in the development of local and regional supply chains, building on lessons learned during the pandemic, providing technical assistance and creating new market opportunities in areas where the need is greatest.

U.S. Cattlemen's Association applauds Introduction of DRIVE Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On Tuesday, Representative Josh Brecheen (R-OK), a fourth-generation rancher and former trucking company owner himself, introduced the Deregulating Restrictions on Interstate Vehicles and Eighteen Wheelers Act, or DRIVE Act.

The bill would prohibit the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from "implementing any rule or regulation requiring vehicles over 26,000 pounds that are engaged in interstate commerce to be equipped with a speed limiting device set to a maximum speed."

In 2022, the FMCSA issued a notice of intent that it was considering rules requiring speed-limiting devices for certain large

commercial vehicles.

U.S. Cattlemen's Association Transportation (USCA) Committee Chairman Steve Hilker issued the following statement:

"Our members are responsible for the daily transportation of millions of animals. Livestock haulers must take into consideration the welfare of their cargo which means avoiding rough-road conditions, adjusting speed, and being more aware of their surroundings to prevent animal injury.

"USCA is opposed to any federal mandate that limits a driver's autonomy over their own truck and trailer. We'd like to thank Rep. Brecheen for his support of our nation's livestock haulers through the introduction of the DRIVE Act."

The bill was co-sponsored by Reps. Pete Sessions, R-Tex., Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., Scott Perry, R-Pa., Eric Burlison, R-Mo., John Moolenaar, R-Mich. and Matt Rosendale, R-Mont.

– U.S. Cattlemen's Association

Got an idea for a story you'd like to see in The Advocate? Drop us a line and let us know at: cattlemans@virtualimages.us

Missouri Cattlemen hosting annual Steak Fry on June 10

The Missouri Cattlemen's Association is expecting more than 500 people to attend their 20th Annual Cattlemen's Steak Fry. The event honors past MCA presidents and raises funds for the association's Political Action Committee. This year, the event is set for June 10, 2023, in the Agriculture Building located on the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, Mo.

"This is a fun event with an important purpose. Participants take time to recognize the efforts of the association's past presidents and also raise significant funds for the PAC," MCA Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee Chair Jimmie Long said, adding that last year's event raised more than \$60,000. "We open this event to the public and expect more than 500 people to attend."

The event has grown substantially in the last few years, according to Long who himself is a past president of the MCA. He attributes the success to the growing awareness that it takes money to ensure candidates who understand and value Missouri agriculture are elected in the state. "Unfortunately, money matters in politics. It takes money to win elections and we want to make certain that people are elected who will ensure agriculture remains the top economic driver in this state," said Long. "We moved the event to a larger venue twice because we keep drawing bigger crowds."

Large animal veterinary loan program passes in Missouri

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, 24 counties in Missouri are labeled "under-served" when it comes to large animal veterinarians. The counties listed are major cattle counties in the state and collectively represent 985,700 head, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This is roughly 27,000 cattle producers impacted.

Missouri Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Mike Deering said that's why the association prioritized expanding the state's Large Animal Veterinary Student Loan Program during the 2023 legislative session.

The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Kent Haden (R-43) and Sen. Justin Brown (R-16) and ultimately passed on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, as part of an omnibus bill (HB 417) sponsored by Rep. Mike Henderson (R-117) and was also included in legislation (SB 138) that passed on May 11.

The legislation would increase the loan amount from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for each academic year and increases the number of students eligible from six to twelve. Authority is given to the Missouri Department of Agriculture to go beyond a dozen if funds are available, which is a possibility as the bill also expands the sources of funding to include grants and donations.

"We want producers to have access to veterinarians and this program has almost 16 years under its belt and a solid track record of success that is simply indisputable," said Deering.

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RAMBLINGS OF A CONSERVATIVE COW DOCTOR

Climate change, Covid and college

By KRAYTON KERNS, D.V.M.
Special to The Advocate

There are three types of people in the world. Those who make things happen. Those who watch things happen, and those who stand around and wonder what happened.

To make things happen, recent high school graduates must clarify a few misconceptions. For example, their beliefs about climate change, Covid, and college are based on regurgitating approved talking points. I am going to fix that.

As I have addressed climate change and Covid previously, I will let those dogs sleep under the porch while I address the college con. You have repeatedly heard how having a college degree is the ticket to a successful, productive life. What a crock. Borrowing money and



You have repeatedly heard how having a college degree is the ticket to a successful, productive life. What a crock. Borrowing money and investing eight years to earn a four-year degree in angry women studies is a ticket to lifelong misery.

investing eight years to earn a four-year degree in angry women studies is a ticket to lifelong misery.

College has become a victim development center where attendees learn useless trivia while blaming society thriving outside academia for the nightmare occurring inside academia. In college it is honorable to scream in the faces of those financially secure, happy, employed, married, and raising children who are also Christ followers. Covetousness always comes to hate.

However, condemning all college degrees is a broad brush because there was a time when certain degrees opened specific doors with medical degrees being the perfect example. Sadly, the stroke poke destroyed that. Society now properly views medical professionals

with the same respect as those who flirt in saloons by day and dance on their backsides by night. They will do and say anything for money.

The Covid scam coupled with my 40 years in veterinary practice has awakened me to the unnerving conclusion veterinarians are just as big a whore as are our human counterparts. We too have been misled by big pharma and because we line their wallets by lifting cash from the pockets of people who trust us, we might be even bigger prostitutes. This brings me to my point.

Recent high school graduates can go in one of three directions:

1) Get on a payroll, buy a ranch or farm, or start a business.

2) Join the military. They are looking for a few good men or at least the fabulous, Bud-Light-

facsimiles of such.

3) Go to college, but there are only two institutes this cow doctor will endorse. These are: Hillsdale College in Michigan because it will explain American exceptionalism and Okoboji University in Iowa for reasons you will discover on your own.

All the world's knowledge was placed at your fingertips the day you learned to read, so find a quiet corner in the Okoboji University Library to read why the propaganda infecting other universities is absent at Okoboji. Go learn something, I'll wait...

For three decades, Krayton Kerns, D.V.M. has been a veterinarian in Laurel, Montana, and owns Beartooth Veterinary Service.

His three children are graduates of the Laurel School System where his wife, Druann, is employed as the district technology coordinator.

He served four terms in Montana's House. His hobbies and passions include his family, marathons, triathlons, long distance relay races and aviation. He is an avid hunter, packer, wagon master and mule Skinner.

Sausages from gene-edited pigs win provisional FDA nod

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the use of gene-edited pigs to make sausages for human consumption as part of a research project at Washington State University.

Researchers at the Pullman, Wash.-based School of Molecular Biosciences used a gene-editing tool to improve specific genetic traits in livestock and is working to win FDA approval for a line of gene-edited pigs. The agency's investigational authorization covers five 2-year-old pigs that were processed at the WSU Meat Lab and inspected by USDA representatives, WSU said in a news release announcing the program's status.

WSU meat scientists processed the pigs into German-style sausages that will be used in catering services that raise travel funds for student members of the WSU Meat Judging team. The gene-editing process is being described as "a high-tech form of selective breeding" that can improve meat quality and the health and resilience of livestock

as environmental conditions change over time, the release added.

The ultimate goal is to demonstrate that food made from such animals is safe to eat and the process could lead to gene-editing in other livestock to produce desirable traits to help boost food production, the researchers noted.

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Missouri criminalizes interfering with transportation of livestock

Legislation moves to the desk of Governor Mike Parson that will criminalize knowingly interfering with the transportation of livestock. The legislation was sponsored by Rep. Brenda Shields (R-11) and Sen. Rusty Black (R-12), and ultimately passed Thursday, May 11, 2023, in an omnibus bill (SB 186) led by Sen. Justin Brown (R-16).

Missouri Cattlemen's Association Executive Vice President Mike Deering said the association supported the legisla-

tion for a multitude of reasons.

"First and foremost, the threat of agri-terrorism is real and we must proactively work to prevent it and offer swift and severe punishment to those who choose to engage in this activity, which threatens the animal, producer and the general public," said Deering. "Secondly, animal rights extremists who choose to endanger both the livestock and the truck driver by preventing the movement of livestock to a processing facility or elsewhere must

be held accountable."

The legislation states that a person commits the offense of interference with the transportation of livestock if the person knowingly does one of the following:

- Stops or otherwise interferes with a motor vehicle transporting livestock;
- Provokes or disturbs livestock when the livestock is confined in a motor vehicle; or
- Puts or places a substance on the livestock that affects its health or use.

The offense of interference with the transportation of livestock is a class E felony for the first offense and a class C felony for any subsequent offense.

"We encourage Governor Parson to sign this legislation into law and we truly appreciate all legislators in both chambers who led or supported this common-sense legislation," said Deering.

— Missouri Cattlemen's Prime Cuts

Total '24 U.S. protein production forecast slips: WASDE report

Red meat and poultry producers should see 1% volume decline in 2024 compared with anticipated 2023 results, according to the latest USDA report on the industry's prospects in the coming year.

The agency's latest World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report projects that lower beef production and fractionally lower pork production will offset production gains in the poultry sector. Beef production in 2024 is forecast lower because of expected declines in both fed and non-fed cattle supplies while pork production is forecast slightly lower, the report said. Weaker expected farrowings in the second half of this year are expected to constrain pork production growth in the first part of next year, although higher hog prices should stimulate a modest increase in 2024 farrowings.

The WASDE report also noted that the higher forecast broiler production reflects declining feed costs and tighter supplies of alter-

native animal meat proteins. Additionally, turkey production is projected to move higher next year as the sector continues to recover from the record-setting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) series of outbreaks that decimated turkey flocks, the report added.

— Meatingplace.com

Ramblings of a Conservative Cow Doctor

RAMBLINGS OF A CONSERVATIVE COW DOCTOR: VOL. III — KERNS

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MIDDLETON from page 3

market with all cash or a very substantial cash down payment. They learned from the 1980s crisis and most everyone, the lenders, in particular, are much more conservative.

When COVID hit in March 2020, there was some initial fear that things could get really ugly. In fact, for 45 days the phone just quit ringing at Chas S. Middleton & Son.

“I mean there was nothing,” says Middleton. “I was scared to death, and I wondered how long it would go on.”

They had eight ranches in contract then. In one week, four of those ranches, which were 1031 exchanges, decided to go ahead and close the sale.

Another three were in the due diligence phase so the buyer’s escrow was refundable, and those buyers immediately terminated their deal.

Then there was one ranch in New Mexico that was to close in two days. The buyer had put up a non-refundable escrow in the amount of \$250,000. Middleton was in the process of circulating the deed and the closing statement when he received a letter from the buyer’s attorney saying he was terminating the transaction and demanding the return of the escrow deposit.

Trying to make the deal go forward, Middleton suggested that the seller offer him a 90-day extension. He did so, but still, the buyer wanted out as he was “scared to death.” In the end, the parties agreed that the buyer would get all but \$25,000 of his escrow money back which enabled the seller to at least pay attorney fees. Six or so months later when things turned around, Middleton sold the ranch for more money than they had it in contract before.

After the initial 45 days, the phones slowly began ringing again and two months after that, things got crazy.

“Everyone wanted to get out of the city ... they were tired of wearing the masks ... they just wanted to get out in the country and breathe fresh air and be away from people,” says Middleton.

It stayed crazy through all of 2021 and the first half of 2022. By the third and fourth- quarter of 2022, the rising interest rates and the talk of recession caused deals to slow way down.

“Right now, we’ve probably got the largest inventory of ranches we’ve ever had,” says Middleton.

While things have slowed, he knows the buyers are still out there.

“People are sitting on a lot of cash because they’re scared of the stock market and there are buyers who still see land long term as a safe place to park money,” says Middleton.

However, he adds that the buyers now are much more selective. The “common” ranches that lack romance are just sitting.

“Buyers now want a legacy type ranch, a premier ranch, something they’d be proud to own, to take their friends to,” Middleton explains.

He points out that the definition of quality means something different to most every buyer. It may be location, it may be good live water, it may be hunting, but typically they want a ranch that has other abilities than just running some cattle, says Middleton.

“We still sell some ranches to ranchers, but most of those are over in New Mexico where there is some state and BLM land mixed in to help cheapen them up.”

Back when his grandfather started in the business, even then, some were of the opinion that land was too high to own, that the only way to make a profit in the cattle business was to lease the land.

“Ranches were bringing \$4-6 an acre,” Middleton points out. “My grandfather leased a lot of ranches. I’ve been mad about that since,” Middleton jokingly points out. “I wish he’d gone out and bought ranches, but he was looking at it strictly from an operational perspective.”

While it is a tough go to make a living off the land with cattle, the land itself has proven to be a worthy investment. According to the Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M, land has appreciated, on average, about six percent annually over the last 50-some years.

Regardless, when Middleton started in the business with his dad, they were still selling ranches to ranchers. That was their market. At that time land was valued by the number of animal units it could run and one animal unit was worth \$1000. Thus, if it could run 1000 cows, it was a \$1 million ranch.

“Today, buyers never even ask what the animal unit cost is.”

The first time that Middleton

Back when his grandfather started in the business, even then, some were of the opinion that land was too high to own, that the only way to make a profit in the cattle business was to lease the land.

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realized that things had changed and that hunting/recreation was the new top dog in terms of pricing ranches was sometime in the 1980s. He had a ranch for sale east of Lubbock and an interested buyer from Mississippi contacted him about wanting a ranch for hunting quail.

“The ranch brought like \$90 an acre and I couldn’t help but think that he was paying \$1.3 million for a ranch just to hunt quail,” says Middleton. “That was the start of it in my mind.”

He also had the listing for the UU Bar near Cimarron, New Mexico, before the recreation market really took hold. It was 130,000-some acres. It took a while, but he finally got it sold for something like \$130 an acre.

“The last time it sold it brought over \$1000 an acre,” says Middleton. “That great escalation was all because it has elk, mule deer and good trout fishing.”

In fact, the transition from selling ranches to ranchers to selling to recreationists is probably the biggest change in the 50-some years he’s been in the business. Early on while out with my dad looking at ranches, the owner would often tell them to come out and hunt anytime.

“Nobody does that anymore,” says Middleton. “Nobody realized the value of recreation 50 years ago.”

Another change and one that he worries quite a lot about is the water situation, particularly in West Texas.

“The way the Ogallala is declining scares me to death,” Middleton admits.

Back when he first started driving for his dad, farmers could pump 1000 gallons a minute. Today that same well might do 200 gallons a minute, he says.

He figures one solution that may come sooner rather than later is tapping into the deeper formations like the Dockum and the Santa Rosa. The problem is those formations don’t produce quality water.

“At some point we’ll have to clean up that water,” says Middleton. “It will come at a big cost, and I’m not sure if farmers will still be able to irrigate out here in West Texas.”

Middleton says his father was a great teacher of the ranch real estate business. First and foremost, he taught him to always be honest. Also, to be good in the ranch selling business one must have a good knowledge of land and what it will do, says

Middleton.

“Be honest with the facts. Don’t sugarcoat things,” he says.

Another quality is knowing where the good lenders are. Additionally, often times an environmental assessment has to be done so they have a company that specializes in that to recommend to their clients. Oftentimes during the due diligence phase, the prospective buyer may want to bring in an expert or an advisor. Middleton has go-to people for that as well.

Middleton has a list of heroes besides his dad. At the top of that list would be Boone Pickens with whom he did 28 ranch deals.

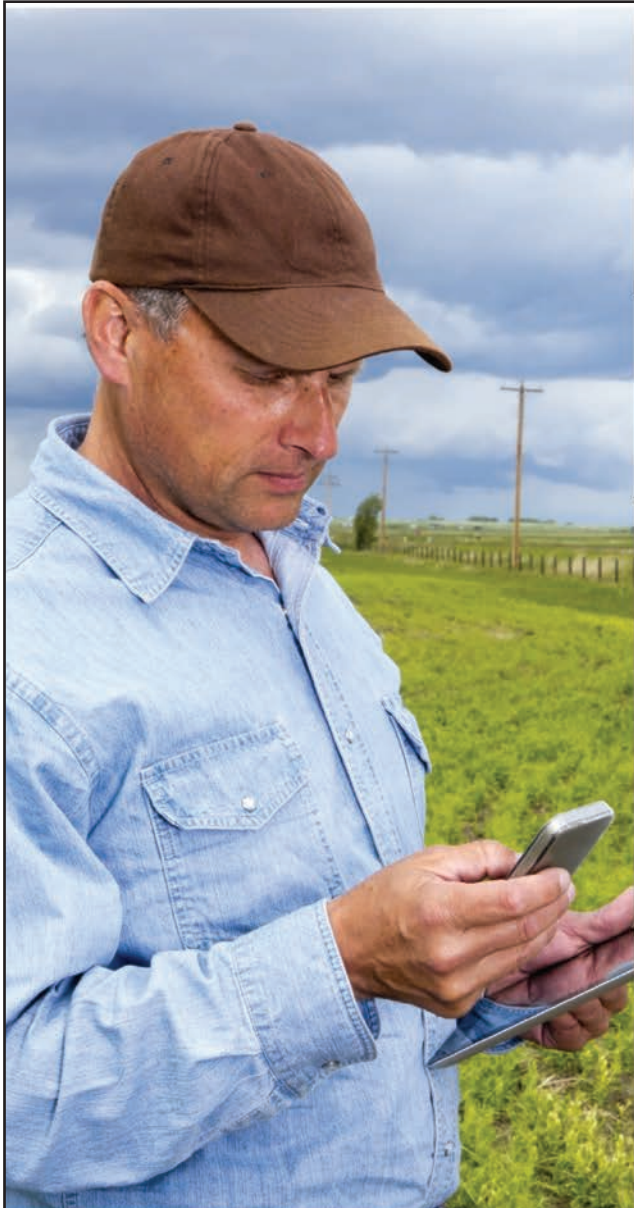
“He was probably the smartest man I’ve ever known and just a wonderful guy,” says Middleton. “He’d tell me things that I should have known being in the ranch real estate business, that I hadn’t even thought about.”

Also at the top of that list was Anne Marion, whom he describes as one of the most caring and giving people he’s ever been around.

“I did business with her for 40 years,” says Middleton. “She was a wonderful lady.”

Middleton sold six or seven different properties for her and did a lot of estate planning work. It was through Ms. Marion that he became acquainted with Boone Pickens. In about 2000, the matriarch of the 6666 Ranch decided to sell off 67,000 acres, the southeast portion of the ranch, the roughest part that also had all the oil production. Having already established a relationship with Middleton, she listed this piece of the ranch with

See PICKENS DEAL, page 19



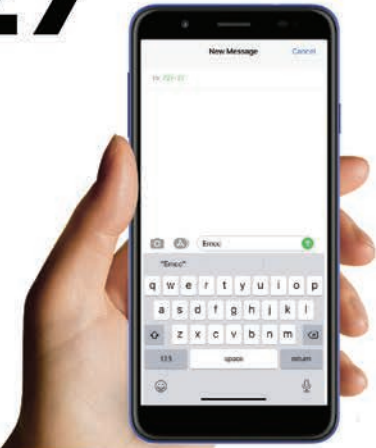
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Plant milo now for cost-saving cattle feeding next winter

TRUXTON, Mo.—Strip-grazing milo (grain sorghum) is a money-saving alternative winter feed plan for cattle, according to University of Missouri Extension agronomy specialist Rusty Lee.

“Winter feed expenses are the killer of profits,” said Lee. “It’s the top reason for whether a cattle producer will make a profit or loss.”

SPA (standard performance analysis) records of Iowa beef producers show the top 25% of cow-calf producers make money while three-fourths lose money every year in herds from 30 to 300 cows.

“Herd size is not a big predictor of profit or loss,” said Lee. “Feed costs are.”

Milo is drought tolerant

Anytime drought causes grazing and hay issues, this system looks better and better, said Lee. May is a good time to plant grain sorghum. Farmers have the option of planting it after wheat, but he recommends the full growing season.

There are only two weeks cattle cannot graze in the fall when frost/freeze injury induces the formation of prussic acid, which takes time to dissipate.

“It takes a few frost events then a killing freeze to be able to graze,” he said. “Typically, the grazing period is Nov. 1 until end of March.”

Some supplemental protein

Lee has found the total digestible nutrients (TDN) for grain sorghum in cattle is high, usually above 70%. Protein, at around 7%, requires supplementation with a high-quality hay, bean meal or other source.

Lee has worked with Eric Bailey, MU Extension state beef nutrition specialist, on a balanced rationing plan. Lee said a good-quality hay that has good protein value can work, and stockpiled grazing works well.

“I have used small square bales of alfalfa hay as a supplement. One of the easier things to do is use soybean meal a few times a week,” he said.

Let cattle harvest the milo to save money

A bushel of milo delivered has harvest expenses, said Lee, but milo grazed has no harvesting costs.

“The total cost of producing milo with no mechanical harvest costs allows us to feed our cattle for just 60 cents per head per day,” he said.

“The scenario we are trying to avoid is supplementing pasture grazing with \$45 to \$60 dollar bales of hay, feeding cattle for \$1.60 to \$2 per head per day. We can graze our milo and we can shave an honest dollar or more off that.”

Using milo grain as an alternative feed in the winter requires simple poly wire electric fencing that’s moved daily. Cattle are close together, eating the grain heads first, and are done in about two hours.

“All you need is access to electricity and water,” said Lee. “We back-graze everything. We limit their forward movement, but we

don’t limit their backward movement, so they always have access to water.”

For cattle producers who also have row crops, Lee said, winter grazing of milo is a “no-brainer” because they’ve got the infrastructure and equipment to make it happen.

Fertility stays on-farm

“When you sell a bushel of milo to the elevator, you’ve exported nutrients off your farm,” Lee said. “If you didn’t graze it, you had to pay extra money to harvest it with a combine and truck it, so you get rid of all that soil fertility. By strip-grazing, I’m not spending that money on harvest or transportation, and I’m keeping the fertility on the farm. That’s a bonus.”

Producers Lee has talked with who graze cattle on milo in the winter really like this method, but there are some doubters.

“It’s going to look rough in those crop fields with mud but in the spring, I pull a disc over it and plant soybeans. It’s better than destroying a pasture, which takes time to remediate.” Lee calls it his “sacrificial paddock.”

Lee began grazing cattle on milo eight years ago, having learned from neighbors in Montgomery and Warren counties. But it’s not a widespread practice. Yet.

“One by one, I’m converting producers, and it’s going pretty good.”

Lee said milo grazing also works well for small ruminants.

“Sheep and goats do not require a daily allocation,” he said. “You can give them two weeks’ worth or greater and they just work around the perimeter.”

There are demonstration milo plots at Sanborn Field on the MU campus and at the MU Bradford Research Farm, near Columbia.



PREPARING FOR MILO: Above, Harry Cope and Larry Ware measure fencing for milo grazing at Ware’s Lincoln County farm. Above right, Cattle graze in milo field at Lee Farms in



Truxton, Mo. Grazing milo is a money-saving alternative winter feed plan for cattle, but preparations need to start now. (Photos by Rusty Lee)

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Historical lessons of the CCP

By TRENT LOOS
Special to the Advocate
Courtesy of High Plains Journal

How crazy is this world now? I hear that sentiment every single day and I have a solid belief it's going to continue to get crazier.

Recently I went into a deep dive into the founding member of the Chinese Communist Party Mao Tse-Tung. Change the names, the dates and you may recognize the script.

It was estimated that anywhere from 20 million to 45 million Chinese died of starvation between 1959-61 as Mao introduced the "Great Leap Forward" campaign.

It is clear he was inspired by the Russian Revolution post-World War I where the farm owners no longer owned their property but "the state" did and the farm owners became peasants tending to the land for the "collectivization" for the good of all. That was the narrative but instead was the premise for neutering the power of the landowner.

I might mention that all of this occurred after Oct. 1, 1949, in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, Mao announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China. His main opposition at the time Chiang Kai-shek and his followers fled to the island of Taiwan, where they formed the Republic of China. If you fail to understand

Japanese beef buyers tour Wisconsin beef processors

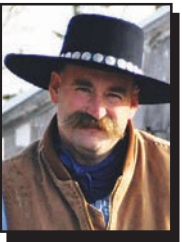
A delegation of Japanese chefs and food service providers visited Wisconsin to see U.S. beef production firsthand.

The delegation visited Huth Polled Herefords, Hahn Meat Packing and a JBS meatpacking plant.

"The Japanese (are) very curious about how the actual cattle is raised... where they come from, how it is raised, how it is treated, so we try to gather the information," Tatsuru Kasatani with the Tokyo office of the U.S. Meat Export Federation told Brownfield Ag News.

The visit was organized by the Wisconsin Beef Council and the U.S. Meat Export Federation to show beef buyers how their meat is raised and processed.

- Meatingplace.com



Some people say the world's great tyrants were able to control critical thinking which in turn lead to genocide. The greatest irony of all is that as Mao Tse-Tung died in 1976 at the age of 82 the overwhelming majority of Chinese citizens thought he was a great leader.

the issue today surrounding China and Taiwan that may be a bridge in information for all of us.

Over the next few years, Mao Tse-Tung instituted sweeping land reform, sometimes through persuasion and other times through coercion, using violence and terror when he deemed it necessary. He seized warlord land, converting it into people's communes. Within a year, an appalling famine set in and entire villages died of starvation.

Mao was eventually run out of office but continued to control the narrative and after a period of being out of office came back into power. It is widely reported that Mao had a true gift of convincing the Chinese citizens that "they" were the problem and that the only avenue to drain the swamp was to get him back in office.

This mirrors what happened in the potato famine of Ireland that killed a million Irish. Mao refused offers of international food relief in order to convince the rest of the world that his plans were a success.

Some people say the world's great tyrants were able to control critical thinking which in turn lead to genocide. The greatest irony of all is that as Mao Tse-Tung died in 1976 at the age of 82 the overwhelming majority of Chinese citizens thought he was a great leader.

All great nations throughout the course of history go through a period of tyrannical control because the nation lost its ability to feed itself. Consider the rhetoric that is ongoing in the United States about reliable fuel and food production. How many of us in agriculture feel the need to be paid today for not farming? How many acres are going into conservation easements where you are tenants of land but lost control of what we do with it? The short answer is far too many.

Trent Loos is a sixth generation United States farmer, host of the daily radio show, Loos Tales, and founder of Faces of Agriculture, a non-profit organization putting the human element back into the production of food. Get more information at www.LoosTales.com, or email Trent at trentloos@gmail.com.

USDA releases results of consumer 'Product of USA' labeling survey

The USDA released survey results on consumer understanding of the "Product of USA" labeling claim.

Proposed rules would allow the claims on single-ingredient products derived from animals born, raised, slaughtered, and processed in the United States. Multi-ingredient products could also use the claims if all components are of US origin, while other US-origin claims would require additional information. The changes aim to provide accurate information and prevent misleading labeling, with an estimated industry cost of \$3 million.

The survey assessed consumer

recognition and comprehension of the "Product of USA" claim. Respondents viewed mock meat products with different claim formats. Findings showed that a claim with a US flag icon had the highest recall rate (1 in 3), while plain-text claims had the lowest (1 in 10). For cued recognition, saliency did not significantly vary, with 70-80% of consumers recognizing the claim across formats.

Regarding comprehension, only 16% understood the "Product of USA" claim correctly, while 63% provided incorrect responses, believing all production steps must occur in the U.S.

Consumers showed better understanding of USDA Choice (68% correctly identified it as quality indicator) and the USDA mark of inspection (83% correctly associated it with federal inspection).

The survey also found that consumers are willing to pay more for products with the "Product of USA" claim and for products with more production steps in the U.S.

The results highlight the need for improved consumer understanding of the "Product of USA" claim and related USDA labeling to ensure informed purchasing decisions.

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'Look Around, Look Within' to recognize the signs of stress

COLUMBIA, Mo. – The theme of 2023 Mental Health Awareness Month is "Look Around, Look Within," says University of Missouri Extension health and safety spe-

cialist Karen Funkenbusch.

Surroundings affect mental health, says Funkenbusch, who works with MU Extension groups to promote mental health awareness in rural Missouri.

MU tools help cattle producers with on-farm finishing budgets

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Many consumers want to buy locally produced beef, and University of Missouri Extension economists can help producers deliver.

Beef producers who want to finish their cattle on their farms now have access to new resources from MU Extension beef specialists to determine their finishing budgets.

The On-Farm Finishing Budget publication and spreadsheet tools released during May – National Beef Month – provide beef producers with resources to help them make the best decision possible when considering retaining their calves past weaning, said MU research project analyst Drew Kientzy.

"Volatility in beef prices and supplies have more producers considering the option of marketing their beef directly to local consumers," said Kientzy, who designed the spreadsheet models and drafted the guide. "We hope this tool helps producers decide if they should finish their calves and how best to sell the animals when ready for slaughter."

The Live Sale budget sheets

allows farmers to customize an enterprise budget for their beef operation raising calves from birth to slaughter weights. The Freezer Beef budget sheet allows farmers to evaluate selling animals directly to consumers as whole, half or quarter carcasses.

A Retail Cuts sheet supplements the Freezer Beef sheet, allowing producers to evaluate selling their animals directly to consumers as individual cuts with custom pricing by meat cut.

These new tools help producers understand their profit margins when they price beef for local markets, said Jennifer Lutes, MU Extension agriculture business specialist.

"It's no longer a guessing game; producers can now make pricing decisions based on their own production costs," Lutes said.

The publication is co-authored by Lutes and Ryan Milhollin, MU assistant professor of agricultural business and policy.

The publication and spreadsheet tools are available for free download at extension.missouri.edu/g684.

For rural Missourians, surroundings may look a little different than in urban areas. Farmers face unique challenges. Driven by a strong sense of duty to the multigenerational legacy of the farm, farmers also face pressures such as extreme weather, markets and finances.

Behavioral signs of stress include loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, wanting to withdraw from people and activities, poor concentration, confusion, forgetfulness, uncertainty or trouble making decisions, relationship problems, feeling anxious or irritable, change in personality, negative thinking and increased smoking/drinking.

Physical signs may be more obvious but often develop gradually. These signs include weight

loss or gain, changes in appetite, stomach or gastrointestinal problems, poor sleep, clenching or grinding of teeth, chest pain and poor hygiene.

For yourself, know the physical signs: labored breathing, fatigue, body aches and rising blood pressure. Slow down, take breaks, exercise and get a physical checkup if you feel that you are stressed. And reach out to friends, family, clergy or medical professionals, says Funkenbusch.

Knowing which tools are available is a good first step in dealing with feelings of stress and anxiety. Everyone experiences — and manages — stress in different ways, says Funkenbusch.

If self-care strategies don't

work for you, consider reaching out to loved ones or an online therapist for additional support. MU Extension coordinates with the North Central Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Center and the Missouri Department of Agriculture to provide resources through USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grants. Farmers, ranchers and immediate family members are eligible to receive free, confidential teletherapy.

To request free teletherapy counseling, go to www.muext.us/PSCFarmRanch, email adpsc@missouri.edu or call 573-882-4677. Another MU Extension service is Show-Me Strong Farm Families, also funded by USDA NIFA, at www.muext.us/SMSFF.

Now is the time to remove fescue seed heads to reduce toxins

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Missouri forage producers should begin removing seed heads from tall fescue grass pastures soon to reduce toxic endophytes that thwart herd health and profits, says University of Missouri Extension state forage specialist Craig Roberts.

Seed heads typically emerge by mid-May in most of Missouri's tall fescue pastures. They contain five times more ergovaline than leaves and have little nutritive value, says Roberts. In early summer, seed heads can also become infected with ergot, a highly toxic fungus that grows on the seed. Ergot infects most grasses and small grains, not just tall fescue.

There are several ways to remove seed heads: 1. Baling before seed heads form; 2. Clipping seed heads and resetting paddocks; 3. Chemical spraying.

Early hay production lets the plant rebound and produce new leaf growth. Clipping paddocks allows the grass to stay in a vegetative, leafy state longer. Clipping results in grasses that are higher in nutrition and digestibility.

Use a management-intensive grazing system that encourages cows to rotate through small pasture paddocks. Don't let cattle graze too short.

Fescue toxicosis costs Missouri's beef industry more than \$160 million each year in reduced weaning weights, conception rates, daily gain and milk

production. Cattle run high internal body temperatures and respiration rates and experience reduced blood flow, which can cause lameness and loss of hooves in the winter.

Regional MU Extension agronomy and livestock specialists can help with a plan to reduce toxins through management or renovating pastures with novel-endophyte fescues. Studies show that clipping seed heads increases average daily gains in stocker cattle and improves pregnancy rates and calf weaning weights.

More information:

- "Tall Fescue Toxicosis" (MU Extension guide), www.extension.missouri.edu/g4669.

- "To raise quality, make hay before seeds set". www.extension.missouri.edu/n/1836.

- Missouri Forage and Grassland Council, www.missourifgc.org.



The search is on for the next contributing author to the Cattleman's Advocate Youth Column!

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Former JBS employees file racial discrimination suit

Former employees of JBS Souderton filed a class action lawsuit against the company, alleging racial discrimination practices.

The 13 former employees filed the suit in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in May.

The lawsuit claims JBS Souderton engaged in discriminatory practices during the hiring, rehiring, and promotion processes, specifically favoring Hispanic, Haitian and native African immigrants over American Black employees.

The former employees said that JBS Souderton employed human resources managers of Hispanic and Haitian descent, who allegedly focus on hiring individuals from their own racial backgrounds. The company allegedly hired employees without interviews and managers used racial slurs to address Black employees, the lawsuit said.

It also claims Black employees were demoted and denied pay raises based on their race.

JBS did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Canada weighs in again on 'Product of USA' label plan

Canadian officials remain concerned about a USDA proposal that would label meat, poultry and egg products from U.S. companies as “Product of USA,” but the issue will not become a trade barrier, a Canadian Embassy deputy chief said.

Arun Alexander, deputy head of mission to the United States, said the plan to allow voluntary labeling of specific food products produced by U.S. companies will not prompt Canada to make an international trade case over the issue. Alexander recently told a members of the North American Agricultural Journalists organization that Canada hopes to hold “constructive exchanges” with U.S. counterparts through USDA’s consultation process as the proposal moves forward into policy.

The proposal allows meat and poultry products that are processed in the United States but originated from animals that come from other countries — like Canada or Mexico — can be labeled as “Made in the USA” or “Product of USA.”

Alexander noted that the integrated supply chain between the United States and Canada should be able to continue to operate efficiently if the proposal is enacted.

Italian ag. minister calls cultivated meat ‘slush’

The Italian government is doubling down on its criticisms of cultivated meat.

According to a Reuters report, Agriculture Minister Francesco

Lollobrigida described the protein as “slush,” and stated that it could never replicate the taste of animal proteins.

In late March, Italy's new conservative government approved a bill banning the use of cultivated food and animal feed. Should parliament approve the bill, Italian industry would not be allowed to produce food or feed “from cell cultures or tissues derived from vertebrate animals.”

Lollobrigida said the bill's aim is protecting Italian culture and tradition. A breach of the rules could result in fines of up to €60,000 (about \$65,000), and factories where violations occur can be shut down; producers may also lose their right to obtain public funding for up to three years.

In his most recent comments, Lollobrigida rejected criticisms of animal agriculture, calling the practice “sustainable” in Italy; he added that cultivated proteins still require “large amounts of energy” to be produced.

Albertsons to pay \$107 million to settle suit over meat promotion

Safeway and parent company Albertsons have reportedly agreed to pay \$107 million to settle claims that stores in Oregon deceived people with a meat promotion.

The grocer allegedly tricked shoppers into thinking they were getting a deal with a buy-one, get-one-free offer, according to the lawsuit filed in 2016.

Safeway is accused of inflating the regular cost of meat and then passing along the expense of the so-called “free” items to its club card members.

For example, boneless pork chops otherwise priced at \$4.49 a pound were shown as costing \$12.99 a pound under the BOGO promotion.

The company violated the Oregon Unlawful Trade Practices Act in BOGO promotions involving beef, chicken and pork by making “false or misleading representations of fact concerning the reasons for, existence of, or amounts of price reductions,” the suit states.

Class members are entitled to about \$200 each from a settlement fund, Supermarket News reported Tuesday.

Albertsons did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Albertsons operates more than 2,200 food and drug stores in 34 states, with Safeway among its more than dozen banners.

CDC: New FSIS regulations may curtail salmonella illnesses

Raising the bar for allowable salmonella contamination in cer-

tain poultry products could reduce outbreaks that have sickened hundreds in the U.S., a new study suggests.

A relatively high number of people are still getting sick from NRTE poultry products even after label changes and other safe-handling efforts, according to the findings released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

From 1998 to 2022, there were 11 salmonella outbreaks linked to such poultry products, would would be subject to potential new USDA regulations, which would declare salmonella an adulterant in breaded stuffed raw chicken products at low levels of contamination.

Up to a third of the 187 people stricken in the outbreaks reported using a microwave to heat a raw product that they believed to already be fully or partially cooked.

The data suggest that stronger controls are necessary to prevent illnesses associated with the products, the CDC researchers said in a summary.

“Outbreaks associated with these products have occurred despite changes to product labels that better inform consumers that the products are raw and provide instructions on safe preparation, indicating that consumer-targeted interventions are not sufficient,” the researchers wrote. “Additional salmonella controls at the manufacturer level to reduce contamination in ingredients might reduce illnesses.”

FSIS recently set a June 27 deadline for input on the regulatory framework first introduced by the agency in October 2022.

The National Chicken Council is among the industry groups to oppose the framework, saying it would lead to “disastrous levels of food waste.”

JBS expects improved performance after net loss in 1Q

JBS's executives said Friday that better market conditions and operational performance should contribute to improving the company's results in the coming quarters.

JBS had a net loss of BRL1.45 billion (\$294 million) in the first quarter of 2023 due to high input costs, reduced poultry meat prices in global markets, and low availability of cattle in the United States pressuring margins. The commercial and industrial performances of business units JBS USA Beef and Seara were also below the company's expectations.

“It is clear that the first quarter of this year does not reflect the potential of our business, much less what we expect for this year. The first quarter is a point outside the curve,” Global chief executive officer (CEO),

Gilberto Tomazoni, said in a conference call in Portuguese.

“In the coming quarters, we expect better conditions in several key markets.”

In the US, he expects increased demand for protein and prepared foods from the second quarter, with the beginning of the grilling season. Tomazoni said the second and third quarters are traditionally the best for the meat industry in the local market.

Demand for ground beef in the US is already high, according to the CEO of JBS USA, Wesley Batista Filho.

The recovery of the US cattle herd should continue in 2023 and 2024, when JBS USA Beef margins should remain close to low-single digits. He sees the business operating at mid-single-digit margins in the long term.

In Brazil, the resumption of beef exports to China and new export permits to markets including the US, Canada, the Philippines and Mexico should help improve JBS Brasil's results in the coming quarters.

Lower grain costs and increased poultry meat prices are expected to benefit Seara in the coming quarters. Batista Filho said that Seara's second quarter will be “much better than the first quarter” but still below the company's expected long-term potential. In Australia, Tomazoni said cattle supply has been showing signs of continued recovery, and the positive performance of the company's diversified businesses should help improve results.

Hackers lifted Sysco customer data

Global food distribution giant Sysco is investigating a cybersecurity breach that extracted company data including customer information, the company reported in a filing this month with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Sysco officials said they became aware of the breach in early March, and that the activity began on Jan. 14. The company immediately launched an investigation, which found that a “threat actor” extracted data relating to the operation of the business, customers, employees, and personal data. Sysco said the

breach hasn’t affected its operational systems or related business functions, nor has it disrupted service to customers. The company continues to investigate the matter, and said it is preparing to meet its obligations related to the extracted data.

Sysco has more than 333 distribution facilities and serves 700,000 collection centers, while employing more than 71,000 employees worldwide. The company posted more than \$68 billion in revenue in 2022.

Hackers have targeted major food companies increasingly reliant on computer technology. In mid-2021, JBS suffered a cyber attack across much of its global network. The company paid an \$11 million ransom to regain control of its system. Two individuals were arrested in Romania in connection with the attack.

Saudi Arabia now has ‘the meats’

Arby's announced the opening of its first restaurant in Riyadh on May 1st, according to a release from the company.

The restaurant, operated by Shahia Foods Limited Company, the master franchisee for Dunkin' in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, offers a menu that combines American favorites with exclusive items available only in Saudi Arabia.

The restaurant features 10 high-quality meat stacks made by hand every day, including beef brisket smoked over wood fire and marinated smokey pulled chicken.

In addition to its signature sides, the Riyadh menu includes special items such as a Smoked Brisket Philly and a Smokey Barbeque Chicken sandwich, both exclusive to Saudi Arabia.

“Adapting restaurants for international tastes is always a fun challenge, and we're excited to share what makes Arby's such a unique and celebrated brand in the U.S. with what are sure to be craveable new favorites,” said Saud Abdullah Al Athel, CEO of Shahia Foods Limited Company.

Arby's plans to expand further in Saudi Arabia and Southeast Mexico in the coming months.

Many of the preceding items were taken from Meatingplace.com

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Is this fake news? We need to get it right or beef demand will be damaged

Op-ed by BILL BULLARD
CEO, R-CALF USA

I looked up the definition of “fake news” in the online Cambridge Dictionary. It states it is “false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.”

So let’s apply this definition to the following circumstance:

Late last month Drovers magazine published a “news” article written by its Editorial Director Greg Henderson titled, “mRNA Conspiracy Theories: Ranch Group Offers ‘Fearmongering’ and ‘Misinformation.’”

The Drovers “news” article took exception to a news release and related commentary by R-CALF USA regarding the experimental drug known as mRNA or messenger ribonucleic acid.

Cattle producers from around the country have been asking R-CALF USA what this new drug was that was being offered as a new kind of vaccine. So, R-CALF USA enlisted the help of its Animal Health Committee Chair, Robert Thornsberry, DVM.

What R-CALF USA found was that this new drug did not fit the traditional definition of a vaccine used in cattle as those vaccines typically involve an injection of an actual virus or bacteria that had been weakened so it does not actually cause the disease; but, instead, the weakened virus or bacteria would be met by the animal’s immune system that would then build an immunity toward the particular disease the vaccine was designed to immu-

nize against. But the mRNA drug was not that because it did not contain an actual virus or bacteria. Instead, it contains a synthetically produced genetic code that tricks the body into developing some level of immunity towards whatever disease the synthetically produced genetic code was targeting. Because of this difference, Dr. Thornsberry refers to mRNA as an injection, not a vaccine.

Now the federal government has granted only emergency use authorization for mRNA injections in humans. But it has not approved mRNA at all for cattle. This is why I refer to mRNA as an experimental drug or injection because it has not yet achieved full government approval.

The logical questions that cattle producers and consumers have are whether mRNA is safe for cattle, whether it affects an animal’s genetic make-up, and whether the meat from an injected animal could transfer the mRNA to humans.

R-CALF USA found scientific studies that question the safety of mRNA and raise concerns that there is a possibility that mRNA can alter the genetic make-up of an animal, and that it could be transferred in the animal’s tissues.

Most importantly, R-CALF USA made clear that “because the research on mRNA is still in its infancy, no one really knows the full impact it has on either humans or animals, particularly its long-term impact” and “this itself warrants more extensive mRNA research focused on safety...”

We then said that Congress

should enact mandatory country of origin labeling (MCOOL) for beef so consumers can choose to buy beef from cattle raised in the U.S. or from some foreign country that could already be using mRNA.

So while the Drovers article accused R-CALF USA of fear-mongering and misinformation, it stated that “No food safety risk exists for meat from animals that have received any vaccination,” and it encouraged readers to celebrate the advances in technology, which would presumably include mRNA injections.

Remember, Drovers has dismissed producer and consumer concerns for the safety of mRNA and it definitively states what mRNA will and will not do even though the research is so new regarding this new injection that it has received neither unqualified government approval for humans nor any approval for cattle.

So R-CALF USA submitted a rebuttal to Drovers’ attacks replete with citations to several actual scientific studies that raise the safety concerns expressed by R-CALF USA.

Guess what Drovers did.

It refused to publish R-CALF USA’s rebuttal.

Drovers claims that its experts found that the studies cited by R-CALF USA are unreliable, that R-CALF USA’s conclusions are inconsistent with the overall scientific community on mRNA; and get this: Drover’s believes R-CALF USA’s rebuttal will do nothing but confuse readers and producers even more and they and consumers will be needlessly alarmed and beef demand will be

damaged. Hmm. So it seems Drovers believes its readers, producers and consumers lack sufficient intelligence to consider the two sides of this important debate and that they should simply accept the mainstreams’ assurances regarding mRNA’s safety. And they should do this even though our government scientists responsible for determining the safety of mRNA have not yet

made such a determination. Can we conclude that Drovers is engaged in fake news by prematurely asserting mRNA’s safety before mRNA has even been approved for cattle and by quashing the public’s opportunity to weigh the competing sides of this important issue? This is for you to decide. But in the end, let’s be sure we get this right or beef demand will be damaged.

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Moscow Mills, MO
- **New Haven Farm & Feed**
New Haven, MO
- **People’s Savings Bank**
Hermann, MO
Montgomery City, MO
New Florence, MO
New Haven, MO
New Melle, MO
Rhineland, MO
- **Perry Farm Service**
Perry, MO
- **Pike Feeds**
Pittsfield, IL
- **Prairie Home Coop**
Prairie Home, MO
- **Quinn Farm Supply**
Monroe City, MO
- **Rickett’s Farm Service of Cairo**
Cairo, MO
- **Ricketts Farm Service**
Salisbury, MO
Shelbina, MO
- **Rural King**
Wentzville, MO
- **Ruyle’s Angus**
Roodhouse, IL
- **Scheidt Bros. LLC**
California, MO
- **Shelton Seed**
Centralia, MO
- **Shetler Feed**
Clark, MO
- **State Farm Insurance**
Centralia, MO
Vandalia, MO
- **Straatmann Feed**
New Melle, MO
- **Strattmann Feed and Transfer**
Labadie, MO
- **The Hitching Post**
Monroe City, MO
- **Twillman Feed**
Fulton, MO
Mexico, MO
- **USA Market News Office**
Country Club, MO
- **Windmill Ridge**
Shelbyville, MO

Kroger to double down on legal threat if merger is challenged

Kroger Co. Chairman and CEO Rodney McMullin reiterated that his company will follow through with plans to litigate any legal or regulatory challenges to its proposed \$26.4-billion purchase of Albertsons Cos., if necessary.

The original deal as announced last fall featured a provision that Kroger will take legal action if any parties or regulators challenge or threaten to file lawsuits to block

the deal, which Kroger and Albertsons have stated is scheduled to close in January 2024. McMullin told Bloomberg in a video interview this week that “if for some reason it was litigated, we would litigate,” as outlined in the proposed merger agreement.

Cincinnati-based Kroger last month asked a federal judge in California to dismiss a lawsuit filed by a group of 25 consumers from 11 states seeking to block the

deal over concerns that it violates U.S. antitrust laws. Earlier this month, McMullin and Albertsons CEO Vivek Sankaran also released a joint opinion column in The Cincinnati Enquirer stressing that no stores will close because of the merger, no frontline workers will lose their jobs and the combined company will not hike grocery prices. The op-ed labeled the concerns noted by observers as “misconceptions” and “myths.”



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Weekly Market Reports

Sponsored by Eastern Mo. Commission Company in Bowling Green



Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, May 5, 2023
Receipts: 706 Week ago: 2,374 Year ago: 611

Friday's auction had very light receipts of feeder cattle selling mostly in small packages and singles for any comparisons. A nice offering of slaughter cows sold fully steady to firm with slaughter steers and heifers steady to 2.00 lower.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 400 lbs 249.00, 450-500 lbs few 220.00-238.00; 500-600 lbs few 211.00-228.00; 600-625 lbs few 209.00-220.00, pkg 658 lbs 203.00; pkg 770 lbs 189.00.
Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 380 lbs 237.00; pkg 407 lbs 223.00; pkg 568 lbs 204.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – Few 570-590 lbs 210.00-215.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 350-400 lbs 214.00-222.00; 400-450 lbs 210.00-234.00, 450-500 lbs 207.00-218.00; 500-550 lbs 211.00-219.00, 550-600 lbs 190.00-199.00; 600-700 lbs 191.00-193.00.
Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 336 lbs 210.00; pkg 437 lbs 208.00; pkg 970 lbs 146.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1/1-2 – 400-450 lbs 221.00-226.00; 500-600 lbs few 205.00-215.00; 600-650 lbs 192.00-204.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) Average dressing, 90.00-94.00; high dressing, 101.00-115.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 90.50-97.00; high dressing, 99.00-108.00; and low dressing, 81.00-88.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 89.50-97.50; high dressing, 98.00-105.00; and low dressing, 80.00-87.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 82.00-89.00; high dressing, 90.50-100.50; and low dressing, 68.00-78.00. Shelly 55.00-62.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2200 lbs, 109.00-121.00; 123.00-132.00; 103.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (100 hd) Choice 2-3 – 1200-1470 lbs 174.00-180.00, Ind 1440 lbs 182.00; Select and Choice 1-3 1200-1350 lbs 170.00-172.50; Select 1-2 – 1150-1235 lbs 165.00-167.00.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS156.txt

EMCC Representative Sales of 5 or more for 5-5-23				
FEMALES				
7 Blk	432	210.00	\$908	SHIPMAN,IL
6 Gray	609	193.00	\$1176	CENTRALIA,MO
5 Mix	618	191.00	\$1180	CHAPIN,IL
MALES				
7 Blk	406	226.00	\$917	DOW,IL
5 Gray	513	228.00	\$1170	CENTRALIA,MO

Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, May 12, 2023
Receipts: 2,118 Week ago: 706 Year ago: 1,396

Compared to the last special two weeks ago, steer calves weighing under 600 lbs sold mostly 5.00-7.00 lower, with 600-700 lbs trading steady to firm and over 700 lbs sold with a firm to higher undertone. Feeder heifers under 600 lbs on a much lighter test sold with a lower undertone, 600-700 lbs sold steady to firm and over 700 lbs were lightly tested. Demand was moderate to good on a moderate supply. Market two weeks ago was very aggressive on steer and heifer calves with Friday's offering not reaching the highs of two weeks ago as overall weighing conditions were not as attractive but calves still sold on a very active market with several part loads of yearling steers in the offering selling with very good demand with good weighing conditions. Slaughter cows sold fully steady to firm, with slaughter steers and heifers trading steady.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1 – 400-500 lbs 263.00-268.00; 500-550 lbs 257.00-266.00, 550-600 lbs 240.00-252.00; 600-650 lbs 230.00-246.50, 650-700 lbs 220.00-223.00, lot thin 663 lbs 238.50; part load 719 lbs 224.00, few 700-800 lbs 201.00-208.50; part load 800 lbs 205.75.
Medium and Large 1-2 – Pkg 387 lbs 237.00; 400-500 lbs 212.00-227.00, pkg unweaned 585 lbs 203.00; 650-700 lbs 196.00-200.00; 700-750 lbs 190.00-197.00; 800-900 lbs 179.00-185.50.
Medium and Large 2 – 440-485 lbs 210.00-211.00; pkg 575 lbs 200.00; pkg 737 lbs 191.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1 – 400-500 lbs 231.00-242.00; 500-600 lbs 223.00-232.00; 600-650 lbs 209.50-222.50, 650-700 lbs 205.00-206.00; lot 780 lbs 189.50.
Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 300-360 lbs 231.00-234.00; 400-500 lbs 219.00-229.00; lot thin 518 lbs 233.00, lot thin 597 lbs 225.00; 600-700 lbs 185.00-188.50; 700-800 lbs 175.00-181.00; lot 834 lbs 173.00.

Medium and Large 2– 475-500 lbs 200.00-204.00; 500-600 lbs 183.00-186.00; pkg 682 lbs 170.00; pkg 807 lbs 160.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1-2 – 400-500 lbs 230.00-244.00; 500-560 lbs 200.00-203.00; 600-650 lbs 192.00-199.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) High dressing, 102.50-112.50. Ind 117.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 91.00-98.00; high dressing, 99.00-108.00; and low dressing, 83.00-89.00. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 89.50-97.50; high dressing, 98.00-106.50; and low dressing, 80.00-87.00. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 81.50-89.00; high dressing, 90.50-98.00; and low dressing, 70.00-80.00. Shelly 60.00-68.00.

Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2200 lbs, 114.00-121.00; 124.00-138.00; 110.00.

Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (50 hd) High Choice 2-4 – 1180-1450 lbs 176.50-179.50; Select and Choice 1-3 – 1250-1365 lbs 170.00-175.00.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS156.txt

EMCC Representative Sales of 5 or more for 5-12-23				
FEMALES				
5 Blk	355	234.00	\$831	OLD MONROE,MO
8 Mix	418	238.00	\$994	DOW,IL
7 Blk	437	230.00	\$1005	CARROLTON,IL
10 Char	458	218.00	\$998	THOMPSON,MO
5 Blk	480	232.00	\$1114	AUXVASSE,MO
19 Mix	492	204.00	\$1004	NEW HAVEN,MO
6 Blk	502	232.00	\$1164	SHELBYVILLE,MO
8 Mix	502	215.00	\$1079	CARROLLTON,IL
35 Mix	518	233.00	\$1207	ROCHEPORT,MO
5 Mix	523	226.00	\$1182	BLUFFS,IL
6 Mix	524	232.00	\$1216	NEW HAVEN,MO
8 Blk	541	225.00	\$1216	CARROLTON,IL
5 Blk	555	228.00	\$1265	HAWK POINT,MO
5 Mix	560	207.00	\$1159	CARROLLTON,IL
6 Blk	570	195.00	\$1112	OLD MONROE,MO
5 Blk	575	223.00	\$1282	SHELBYVILLE,MO
6 Blk	576	223.50	\$1287	BOWLING GREEN,MO
25 Mix	597	225.00	\$1344	ROCHEPORT,MO
7 Blk	606	222.50	\$1348	KNOX CITY,MO
5 Mix	608	221.00	\$1344	BOWLING GREEN,MO
5 Blk	611	188.50	\$1152	PARIS,MO
5 Blk	630	209.50	\$1320	HAWK POINT,MO
17 Mix	643	217.00	\$1395	BOWLING GREEN,MO
7 Gray	664	206.00	\$1368	PRAIRIE HOME,MO
11 Blk	667	206.50	\$1378	TROY,MO
5 Mix	677	205.00	\$1388	ROCHEPORT,MO
7 Mix	679	186.50	\$1267	BROWNSVILLE,TN
15 Mix	685	185.00	\$1267	NEW HAVEN,MO
5 Blk	732	175.00	\$1281	BELLFLOWER,MO
5 Mix	768	179.00	\$1375	IUKA,IL
15 Mix	780	189.50	\$1479	PRAIRIE HOME,MO
8 Mix	781	181.00	\$1414	COLUMBIA,MO
8 Mix	807	160.00	\$1291	BROUGHTEN,IL
21 Mix	834	173.00	\$1442	NEW HAVEN,MO
13 Blk	890	179.00	\$1593	COLUMBIA,MO
5 Blk	1004	161.00	\$1616	COLUMBIA,MO
5 Blk	1101	164.00	\$1806	MEMPHIS,MO

MALES				
5 Blk	399	266.00	\$1061	HERMANN,MO
8 Blk	404	251.00	\$1013	NEW HARTFORD,MO
5 Blk	439	262.00	\$1150	BOWLING GREEN,MO
5 BWF	457	235.00	\$1074	MOSCOW MILLS,MO
6 Blk	463	263.00	\$1216	CLARK,MO
8 Blk	467	240.00	\$1121	GODFREY,IL
5 Blk	469	263.00	\$1233	PERRY,MO
5 BWF	476	267.00	\$1271	CHESTERFIELD,IL
22 Blk	491	265.00	\$1300	NEW HARTFORD,MO
5 Blk	498	264.00	\$1315	HERMANN,MO
8 Blk	501	266.00	\$1333	OPDYKE,IL
17 Blk	502	265.00	\$1331	CARROLTON,IL
16 Blk	526	257.00	\$1352	BOWLING GREEN,MO
6 Blk	531	263.00	\$1396	OLD MONROE,MO
7 Blk	531	258.00	\$1369	BLUFFS,IL
5 Mix	531	264.00	\$1402	BOWLING GREEN,MO
6 Blk	534	266.00	\$1421	AUXVASSE,MO
9 Mix	567	254.00	\$1439	GODFREY,IL
11 Blk	571	190.00	\$1086	CENTRALIA,MO
6 Mix	578	224.00	\$1294	ROCHEPORT,MO
11 BWF	580	241.50	\$1400	CHESTERFIELD,IL
7 Blk	586	240.00	\$1406	SHELBYVILLE,MO
11 Mix	607	195.00	\$1184	MOSCOW MILLS,MO
11 Blk	610	237.50	\$1450	KANE,IL
5 Blk	613	240.00	\$1471	OPDYKE,IL
12 Blk	615	246.50	\$1516	AUXVASSE,MO
6 Blk	618	240.00	\$1482	PARIS,MO
6 Blk	623	237.00	\$1475	CARROLTON,IL
51 Mix	625	242.50	\$1515	CENTRALIA,MO
5 Blk	638	236.00	\$1506	MOUNT STERLING,IL
11 Blk	646	192.50	\$1244	OLD MONROE,MO
33 Blk	664	238.50	\$1583	BOWLING GREEN,MO
5 Blk	669	180.00	\$1204	HETTICK,IL
8 Blk	679	200.00	\$1359	MOUNT STERLING,IL

16 Mix	683	220.00	\$1504	SHIPMAN,IL
8 Blk	706	190.00	\$1342	TROY,MO
8 Mix	711	197.00	\$1400	PRAIRIE HOME,MO
56 Blk	720	224.00	\$1614	CENTRALIA,MO
7 Blk	722	195.00	\$1408	HAWK POINT,MO
12 Mix	748	190.00	\$1422	NEW HARTFORD,MO
7 Blk	751	208.00	\$1561	FLORA,IL
15 Mix	755	201.00	\$1517	PRAIRIE HOME,MO
6 Mix	760	175.00	\$1330	BROUGHTEN,IL
49 Mix	800	205.75	\$1647	SHIPMAN,IL
7 Blk	834	185.50	\$1546	PALMYRA,IL

Eastern Missouri Commission Company, Bowling Green
Market Report for Friday, May 19, 2023
Receipts: 1,305 Week ago: 2,118 Year ago: 1,108

Friday's sale was a Special Bred Cow and Pairs sale with a nice quality offering of heifer pairs and young 3-5 year old pairs selling with moderate to good demand along with several consignments of mostly 4-6 year old bred cows in the 2nd and 3rd stage selling with moderate demand. Slaughter cows on a large offering sold 3.00-8.00 higher as slaughter cows sold on a very active market with many stick-out sales of high dressing cows many selling with good weighing conditions. Slaughter steers and heifers sold steady to 3.00 higher on a nice quality offering. Feeder cattle were lightly tested selling mostly as singles and small packages.

Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 400-500 lbs 236.00-242.00, pkg 488 lbs 260.00; few 500-600 lbs 219.00-235.00; few 630-650 lbs 210.00-212.00.
Medium and Large 2 – Pkg 560 lbs 209.00; pkg 634 lbs 200.00.

Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1-2 – Few 350-400 lbs 226.00-227.00; few 400-500 lbs 207.00-224.00; few 500-530 lbs 206.00-213.00; few 550-600 lbs 191.00-200.00; pkg 625 lbs 180.00; few 700-800 172.50-184.00.

Feeder Bulls: Medium and Large 1 – Pkg 408 lbs 248.00; pkg 482 lbs 240.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 300-350 lbs 244.00; pkg 452 lbs 216.00; few 500-525 lbs 210.00-212.00.

Replacement Cows: Bred - Medium and Large 1-2 – Heifers lot 955 lbs 3rd stage 1825.00, pkg 1060 lbs 2nd stage 1725.00; lot 3-4 yrs 1050 lbs 2nd stage 1860.00; lot 3-5 yrs 1163 lbs 3rd stage 1800.00; 4-6 yrs 1100-1450 lbs 2nd stage-few 3rd stage 1440.00-1725.00; 7 yrs to short solid mouth 1200-1500 lbs 2nd-3rd stage 1260.00-1440.00.
Pairs: Medium and Large 1 – Heifer Pairs 950-1100 lbs w/150-200 lb calves 2725.00-2825.00; 4-6 yrs 1100-1250 lbs w/150-250 lb calves 2250.00-2625.00; 7 yrs to short solid mouth 1100-1500 lbs w/150-250 lb calves 1660.00-1725.00.
Medium and Large 1-2 – 4-7 yrs 1000-1250 lbs w/150-250 lb calves 1690.00-1975.00.
Medium 2 – Heifers 750-800 lbs w/100 lb calves 1800.00-1925.00.

Slaughter Cows: Premium White (65-70% lean) High dressing, 102.00-116.00. Ind 120.00. Breakers (70-80% lean) Average dressing, 91.00-98.50; high dressing, 100.00-115.00; and low dressing, 84.00-89.50. Boners (80-85% lean) Average dressing, 89.50-97.50; average dressing, 99.00-113.00; and low dressing, 83.00-87.50. Lean (85-90% lean) Average dressing, 82.50-90.50; high dressing, 91.50-105.00; and low dressing, 70.00-80.00. Shelly 60.00-68.00.
Slaughter Bulls: Yield Grade 1-2 – 1300-2200 lbs, 114.00-124.00; 125.00-141.00; 110.00.
Slaughter Steers and Heifers: (100 hd) High Choice-Prime 2-4 – 1365-1470 lbs 180.00-183.50; High Choice-Choice 2-3 – 1200-1350 lbs 175.00-179.00; OTM (over thirty months of age-heifers) 1430-1605 lbs 125.00-135.00.

Source: MO Dept of Ag-USDA Market News Service, Bowling Green, MO, Greg Harrison, Market Reporter 573-751-5618. 24 hour recorded report 1-573-522-9244 www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/JC_LS156.txt

EMCC Representative Sales of 5 or more for 5-19-23				
FEMALES				
6 Blk	423	219.00	\$925	MONROE CITY,MO
6 Blk	453	224.00	\$1015	CENTER,MO
5 Mix	594	191.00	\$1135	CENTRALIA,MO
5 Blk	613	177.00	\$1085	BOWLING GREEN,MO
5 Mix	726	184.00	\$1336	CENTRALIA,MO

MALES				
7 Mix	561	209.00	\$1173	MEDORA,IL

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PICKENS DEAL from page 12

him.

Not long after listing it, he got a phone call from Ron Bassett, Boone Pickens's right-hand man. Boone wanted to see the ranch. It was on that first visit on the way back to the landing strip that Boone told Middleton how it was going to work. He was going to buy the ranch and as soon as it closed, he intended to list it back with him.

"Boone tells me that I'm to cut it up into smaller tracts and double his money," says Middleton. "That got my attention because I knew then that if I didn't perform, I would never hear from him again."

Before that purchase, Boone owned 22,000 acres in the Texas Panhandle. He understood the potential that the recreation market had with money-men in Dallas, Austin and Houston. He predicted that they would see the land in West Texas and the Rolling Plains as being cheap, but what would really entice them was the fact that the land had deer and quail.

On those 67,000 acres, they put out 1400 quail feeders, and one of Boone's men moved to the ranch and lived in a travel trailer. Every morning he'd fill up a pickup bed of grain and go out and shovel it into those quail feeders, and once or twice a week he used a broadcast spreader to feed the roads.

"I'd go out to show the ranch and there would be quail and deer and turkey everywhere," says Middleton.

Middleton cut those 67,000 acres up into 15 tracts and in 15 months he had more than doubled Boone's money.

Boone's response was, "Let's go do it again."

When the 2008 recession hit, Boone decided he wanted to expand his ranch in the Panhandle. He didn't want to deal with the neighbors, so he sent Middleton to do his bidding.

Basically, those neighbors told Middleton that if he wanted their land Boone would have to pay a premium. So, he did.

Fran Morrison, who lived at Pampa, had 15,000 acres that joined Boone to the West. She was a particularly tough bargainer, and it just so happened that was the one tract that Boone wanted the most.

Ranches in the area were bringing \$250 to \$300 an acre. Middleton was told to offer her \$400 an acre. Ms. Morrison knew what she had though. After Middleton had given her his spiel and told her how all the other properties had brought \$250 to \$300 an acre, she promptly points out that what was different about her ranch was that it actually joined Boone's property. She informs Middleton that she wanted \$600 an acre. Boone countered at \$450. When Middleton took her the \$450 offer the very next day, she told him that she'd had a dream the night before that Boone had paid her \$1200 an acre for her ranch.

"You tell Boone that's the new price."

Middleton was discouraged

Before that purchase, Boone owned 22,000 acres in the Texas Panhandle. He understood the potential that the recreation market had with money-men in Dallas, Austin and Houston. He predicted that they would see the land in West Texas and the Rolling Plains as being cheap, but what would really entice them was the fact that the land had deer and quail.

and suggested to Boone that they forget it, to look in another direction. Boone's response instead was "Sam, yesterday she priced it at \$600 an acre. Get back up there and tell her I'll give her the \$600 an acre."

After another round of negotiations, they agreed on \$700 an acre. Ms. Morrison was in her 70s at the time and she lived another 10 or so years and for several years after, she'd call Middleton a couple of times a year to tell him how she'd out-traded the legendary Boone Pickens.

As it turned out, the reason Boone wanted that particular piece of property was that he needed that flat, level plains country to build his jet landing strip.

Middleton was also one of the brokers who got the listing for the Waggoner Ranch. Middleton knew the Wharton family and the Willingham family. The ranch was split 50-50 and though all were good people, the two families had different philosophies and they'd been fussing for years.

When the families couldn't come to terms, the ranch went into the hands of a receiver. Middleton showed the ranch to several qualified prospects including Brad Kelley, the Matador Ranch owners, and to Boone, but the problem was the receiver wouldn't price the ranch.

"I brought him an offer once, and all he would say was they weren't taking that price," says Middleton. "He wouldn't even make a counter."

It went on and on that way until a different receiver was finally appointed. His goal was to get the ranch sold. He asked Middleton to testify as an expert witness in District Judge Dan Mike Bird's court to explain what needed to be done to get the ranch ready to sell.

"They first needed a survey; they didn't even have a legal description," says Middleton. "They didn't know within 20,000 to 30,000 acres how much land they really had to sell, and I knew it was going to take a while to get that survey done. They also needed to get the title work done. I mean we're talking about a ranch that was spread over six counties."

Every time he went to the courthouse, sitting in the room was a man that Middleton did not know. He later found it was Bernie Uechtritz, who had been following the deal for a while, but he too could never get a price. As it turned out, the two brokers came together and together they listed the ranch.

The other party involved was Joel Leadbetter, a broker with Hall & Hall out of Montana. He contacted Middleton who suggested that they could likely get the ranch sold to Stan Kroenke. The team of brokers flew to Denver, where they met with Stan Kroenke and Sam Connolly, Kroenke's general manager. They set up a date for Kroenke to tour the ranch and after that tour, Kroenke sent in an entire team of experts.

"He had attorneys and CPAs going through the books," said Middleton. "He sent in inspectors to inspect all the structures; he sent people out to study the oil company, he had people appraising the cattle and the horses."

Because it was a court-ordered sale, there could be no contingency.

"It couldn't be subject to financing, subject to due diligence or title examination, everything had to be done upfront," Middleton explains. "Plus, when the escrow money was put up it was immediately non-refundable. There was no out at all. That eliminated a lot of people."

In fact, when it got to the contract stage and Kroenke put up the escrow money, the amount was so large that no one wanted to accept the liability.

"Can you imagine, I'm talking about a deposit that is so big that the title companies were scared one of the employees was going to run off with the money, and they did not want that responsibility," says Middleton. "We finally talked to a title company in Houston that agreed to hold the money."

It was a team effort and the

good thing about it was that the court had made it so that each broker got the same fee and all of that was explained up front.

"It was a very sizable commission for all three of us."

Middleton says he only takes those listings that are priced realistically.

"I've turned down a lot of listings because of price."

In establishing a price, Middleton brings a list of like properties that have sold in the area to his client. He then makes a suggestion as to what he thinks the ranch would sell for while leaving some room to negotiate.

He recalls one such negotiation where he told the seller that he thought the ranch would bring \$1500 an acre. A couple of weeks later, they called ready to list, but they'd decided they wanted to list their ranch for \$2250 an acre. Middleton turned them down.

"It was something like a \$200 million listing, and they couldn't believe that I would turn it down," he says.

As it turned out, the property languished on the market for two years.

Middleton says what a lot of people also don't understand is that when he lists a ranch, he has several buyers in mind, and he always brings his best prospect first. He recalls one particular listing where he told the seller that he thought it would bring \$900-1000 an acre. The seller interviewed seven different brokers and ended up listing with Middleton for \$1250 an acre. Within six weeks, Middleton brought in a cash buyer for \$1000 an acre.

"They thought it was too quick, that I hadn't even started advertising that this was the first guy that looked at it."

In the end, they turned down the \$1000 an acre cash offer and a year and a half later Middleton

got it sold for \$925 an acre.

With just a few exceptions, Middleton has always been the seller's broker, but he also understands the importance of being honest with both sides. Now in business for over 100 years, the trustworthiness behind the name of Chas. S. Middleton and Son has stood the test of time.

"I don't know how you replicate that," says Middleton. "It's not that I'm smarter than anyone else, we've just been doing it a long time."

Back when his dad really got going on the real estate side of the business there wasn't any such thing as an exclusive listing. His dad carried around a three-ring binder notebook. When he'd go out and look at a ranch, he'd take notes and put them in that binder. He'd have a crude map that was generally hand-drawn, and he carried a Polaroid camera.

"In this notebook, there might be 50 ranches that he had in his inventory," says Middleton. "He didn't have a listing on any of them. It was a buckshot deal."

The first exclusive Middleton ever got was in 1978, with Midland rancher and oilman Bobby French. He had the 65,000-acre L7 Ranch east of Lubbock for sale.

"It was hard to get those exclusives back then because the public wasn't ready for that until then," says Middleton. "Now that's all we work on."

Gone too are the days of his dad's three-ring binder. Now they have professional photographers and professional maps and professional brochures all done in-house. In fact, everything that goes into the marketing of a ranch today is another of the big

See RANCH MARKETING, page 21

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Cargill accused of relying on ‘dirty’ soy, fueling deforestation in Brazil

Cargill Inc. is failing to make sure its Brazil-sourced soy is not fueling deforestation in the country's tropical rainforests, an environmental law nonprofit alleges in an official complaint.

Among the biggest soy traders sourcing from Brazil, the com-

modities giant "should be leading the world's best practice to stop soy linked to deforestation," ClientEarth attorney Laura Dowley said in a press release.

"Instead, its poor due diligence raises the risk that the meat sold in supermarkets across the

world is raised on so-called 'dirty' soy," said Dowley, in announcing the complaint filed with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

ClientEarth said it wants to hold Cargill "accountable under international standards in relation

to its deforestation footprint," saying it found sizable gaps in its policies and its actions.

Cargill did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

As outlined on its website, Cargill has committed to ensuring its soy from the Amazon and the Cerrado biome is deforestation-free by 2025 and fully elim-

inate deforestation practices by 2030.

The lawyers filing the complaint highlighted its urgency, citing scientists who say the Amazon is nearing a tipping point, after which the rainforest will become dry grassland and spew enormous amounts of carbon dioxide.

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RANCH MARKETING from page 19

changes of Middleton's tenure.

He also points out that while he has a lot of repeat customers, surprisingly the majority of the time he sells a ranch to someone he did not previously know. He contends that shows the power of the internet.

"We're getting these properties into the hands of people, buyers who we never would have imagined," says Middleton.

As for foreign buyers, he has yet to sell a ranch to one. He had a lot of foreign lookers when it came to the Waggoner. In fact, there were lookers from 16 different countries – from places that perhaps one might expect like Mexico, Canada and Argentina but also from other countries like France, Spain, England, the United Arab Emirates, even India, South Korea and Cambodia as well as two groups out of China and one out of Japan.

"The only one that knew anything about land was a sixth-generation farming and ranching family from Argentina," says Middleton. "They knew exactly what they were looking at, but the rest of them didn't have a clue."

When he asked these prospective buyers why they were interested in property in the United States, each and every one of them responded that it was because the United States is the safest place in the world to invest money.

While Middleton is proud of all the deals he did with Boone over the years, he says the sale he's probably the most proud of is the 6666 Ranch for Ms. Marion.

"Anne told me before she died that she wanted me to handle the sale," says Middleton. "I thought maybe the ranch would pass to her daughter, but about five years before she died, I asked her about that. She says, 'Sam, why would I want to burden her with that?'"

At her funeral, her trustee told him that he'd be calling. It wasn't until the trustee called that Middleton learned that Ms. Marion requested that he try and sell all three pieces of the ranch to one individual.

"It was a big request," says Middleton.

As it turned out, he got a lot of requests for the Frisco Creek Ranch and the Dixon Creek Ranch, but he wasn't getting many for the 6666 headquarters operation. That is until Taylor Sheridan came calling. He was on the Sixes doing some filming for his Yellowstone series and Sheridan made the comment to one of the cowboys that the ranch was sure nice. That cowboy reportedly let Sheridan know that it was for sale.

At some point, Sheridan's

Middleton has slowed down some. He no longer gets up at 2 a.m. to drive 500 miles to a ranch. For 40 years he drove about 85,000 miles a year, and still today he drives about 35,000 a year. Now though, he has a plane and pilots, and that has taken off a big load

broker, Don Bell out of Weatherford, contacted Middleton about setting up a time for Sheridan to look over the ranch.

In the end, he bought it all – the three ranches, the cattle, the horses, the equipment and half the minerals.

"Everybody was happy at the end of the day, and I think Anne Marion would have been happy," says Middleton.

"Taylor has some financial backers who really believe in him, and I think he'll stick because he has brought in an income with his filming that was not there before."

Middleton has slowed down some. He no longer gets up at 2 a.m. to drive 500 miles to a ranch. For 40 years he drove about 85,000 miles a year, and still today he drives about 35,000 a year. Now though, he has a plane and pilots, and that has taken off a big load.

Besides his son Charlie, the company has six other associate brokers and another seven sales agents scattered across Texas and New Mexico. They too carry a lot of the weight.

"I'm very fortunate to have quality help because I couldn't do it all myself."

Sam has no hobbies, but he has two small personal ranches that he enjoys. These ranches are operated by his son Jed.

In thinking about retirement, he's finally decided to do what so many suggested he do. He's writing a book about some of his ventures and adventures of being in the ranch real estate business.

"It's just stories about deals, about people, about showing ranches, about the transactions," says Middleton. "It's about the good guys and some of the con artists."

Eric O'Keefe is working with him on the book.

"Eric told me when we started this that I had to understand that it wouldn't be a best seller. He said no unknown has ever had a best seller. He said, on average a book that's published by an unknown might sell 22 copies."

Middleton assured O'Keefe that was fine that he was doing it for his kids and his grandkids to pass on some of the history of the family business.

Who knows though. Maybe one of the best-known unknowns, one of the best-known ranch brokers in the

country, might just get that best-seller.

For now, at least until that hits the shelves, Middleton's plans are to keep on selling.

"As long as I'm still enjoying it, I'll continue. It's been my life; it's the only job I've ever had, and I've met a lot of wonderful people."

NPB says 'clock is ticking' if ASF hits U.S.

A U.S. outbreak of African Swine Fever could be ruinous for the nation's pig farmers, costing the pork and beef industries up to \$80 million over 10 years, cautions the National Pork Board.

A recent analysis also estimates 60,000 job losses during a decade should ASF be detected in the U.S. hog herd, Dr. Patrick Webb, the board's director of swine health, told Brownfield

Ag News.

A confirmed case means "the clock is ticking," Webb told Brownfield. "And what we need to figure out is where disease is and isn't as fast as possible."

The difficult potential outcomes are another reason for pork producers to enroll in AgView, a contract-tracing technology for pigs,, according to Webb.

Dr. Dermot Hayes of Iowa

State University told Brownfield the extent of the potential damage comes down to export markets, given "we do not have agreements with other countries as to how they would respond, so a likely event is that we would lose access."

China is among the nations currently facing new ASF infections, with the disease active in Asia and Europe.

– Meatingplace.com

USDA urged to ban low-carbon beef claims

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is being urged to prohibit meat producers from touting their beef as "low carbon" by the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

"There is no such thing as low-carbon beef," Scott Faber, EWG's senior vice president for government affairs, stated in a news release.

The nonprofit organization's petition also calls on the agency

to require independent verification of other climate claims made on food labels, calling them confusing and misleading.

Claims like "net zero" and "carbon neutral" on food products can have consumers believe they result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, rather than difficult-to-measure farmland practices, the document states.

Filed with the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service

(FSIS), the petition was referred to the Office of Policy and Program Development for review, according to media reports.

The USDA-approved certification for low-carbon beef is a voluntary program launched in 2021 that requires participating producers reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10% below an industry baseline.

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Deal could be near for West Coast ports, workers: WSJ

Unionized longshore workers and West Coast port employers are in the final stages of contract talks after resolving several key issues, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal.

The negotiations, which have been ongoing for almost a year, cover over 22,000 dockworkers at ports spanning from California to Washington state. Both the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association declined to

comment on the negotiations, but some shipping officials familiar with the talks hope to reach a tentative agreement by June.

The deal would end a contentious period in port labor relations that has led some retailers and manufacturers to shift goods away from the region to avoid possible disruptions. The remaining issues to be resolved include wages, pensions and the length of the contract. Shipping officials expect the ILWU to request a pay

increase in the first year of the new contract to match a deal recently reached with an ILWU chapter in Hawaii of 10%.

A retroactive agreement would cover the period from July 2022, when the previous contract expired. The talks have taken place amid rising tensions between companies and workers, including dockworkers, truckers, rail and warehouse workers in Europe, Asia and the U.S.

– Meatingplace.com

Tyson implementing methane capture technology in 2nd facility

Tyson hopes a new methane capture technology will help the company improve its carbon footprint.

The protein giant teamed up with energy companies NW Natural and BioCarbN to build a new facility in Nebraska.

According to a release from NW Natural, they will construct the \$12-million facility to capture methane from Tyson's Dakota City, Neb. Plant, and will convert the gas into renewable natural gas to heat homes and business.

This is the second Tyson facility to utilize such technology, following the processor's Lexington, Neb. plant from early last year. According to the release, the combined plants will produce enough natural gas to heat 5,400 homes annually.

David H. Anderson, NW Natural president and CEO, said the firm is "aggressively pursuing additional opportunities, so we can increase our use of renewables over time."

In recent years, Tyson has invested in renewable energy startups and set a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goal by 2050.

– Meatingplace.com

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Laugh Tracks in the Dust.....

Rural bachelor happiness

By MILO YIELD
Special to The Advocate

An elderly bachelor farmer/rancher, ol’ Abbott Dunn, wuz working with his attorney on the legal papers necessary for the distribution of all his property and personal effects when Abe departed this Earth.

After some long thought on the matter, Abe came up with a plan. He told his attorney that he wanted to split all his earthly wealth equally to three ladies to whom he had proposed marriage during his life. He said that all three had rejected his marriage proposal.

His attorney raised his eyebrows at the plan and asked, “Abe, why in the world do you owe those three women anything? They rejected you.”

To which Abe replied with finality, “It’s because of their refusals that I owe all my earthly happiness and my wealth.”

A rural couple were facing economic hardships. To paraphrase the lyrics of an old country music song, “There was too much month at the end of the money.”

During one such discussion about family finances, the hubby said, “You accuse me of spending too much on the farm. Can you name one thing that I’ve bought that we haven’t used on the farm?”

To which his quick-tongued wife replied, “Why, what about the expensive fire extinguisher you bought a year ago? We’re never used it once.”

A farm wife was actively, verbally supervising her teenage son as he worked and toiled in the family garden.

A neighbor driving by stopped and complimented the wife profusely on the beautiful garden.

After his mom generously accepted the neighborly compliment, the son piped up to the neighbor, “You know the reason for this nice garden, don’t you? Mom’s been blessed with a green tongue, not a green thumb.”

Sadly, I’ve been too busy this spring to do any fishing. But that didn’t keep my from hearing a good fishing story.

I liked the one about the guy, ol’ Kasten Hooker, who caught a giant spawning black bass in one of the Flint Hills’ beautiful limestone ponds.

When he got home, he went into the kitchen and exulted to his wife, “Hon, I caught a beauty of a bass today. I’m sorry you were too busy to go with me today, Sweetie. Fishing without

you along just ain’t as fun as when I can share the great outdoors with you, Tootsie.”

At that his wife turned to him and tartly responded, “Cut the schmoozing, Sweetheart, dear. I ain’t cleaning it.”

Last week was one for the record books. I mentioned in the previous column that Nevah had hip replacement surgery and then had rehab problems. Well, the medicos came up with a reason. Nevah had a run-in with a blood chemistry problem that goes by the medical acronym of SIADH. That stands for Syndrome of Inappropriate Antidiuretic Hormone Secretion. That’s a mouthful.

The only reason for discussing Nevah’s health situation is to hopefully put folks on the alert to watch for it if they or loved ones are recovering from surgery or other undue physical

stress.

Here’s a short definition of SIADH: “SIADH is a condition in which your body makes too much antidiuretic hormone (ADH). It caused disorientation. It plays a role in the balance of water and salt (sodium) in your blood, blood pressure, and kidney function. In short, a person’s blood sodium level crashes and causes your body to retain too much water. SIADH can affect anyone, but the likelihood of the condition increases with age. SIADH is more common in people who are recovering from surgery in a hospital due to the administration of fluids, certain medications and their body’s response to pain and stress.”

In Nevah’s case, two days after surgery her blood sodium level plummeted, causing her to fall. She spent a week in the hospital in Topeka where the medicos got her blood sodium

back to normal. But, unfortunately, the fall caused a hairline fracture of her femur, several inches below her replaced hip.

That’s the bad news, the hopeful news is that her doc says the bone should heal on its own in a month to six weeks. Thankfully, she fully recovered from the temporary disorientation.

So, that’s where we’re at. We’re home at Dampfewmore Acres. She’s rehabbing here and being careful. So far, so good.

Here’s a few words of wisdom for the week.

“Parents want their kids to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nuthin’ but the truth — unless there are visiting guests.”

“Beards still serve a useful modern purpose. They’re worn mostly by men.”

“The Golden Years are when your knees may buckle, but your belt won’t.”

That’s the scoop for this week. Have a good ‘un.

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Try this Chopped Italian Sub Sandwich for summer

Made and reviewed
by CHARLOTTE ANGELL
Rated by JON ANGELL
For The Advocate

Jon's Critique. As we get into warmer and busier days on the farm, the Sassy Alabamian Cook went on the internet for a quick and easy meal, something a little lighter than we often have. This was the recipe she came up with from an internet video she watched.

I was pleasantly surprised. It made for a pretty good sandwich. I could see this as a good one to pack out to the crew working in the fields this summer.

I'm not a big raw tomato fan... but chopped, slathered and mixed in with everything, I hardly noticed the tomatoes. I think the cook enjoyed the chopping process on this one. That class on "knife skills" years ago is still paying dividends. Give this one a try.



Chopped Italian Sub Sandwich

Shredded lettuce
2-3 ham slices
2-3 Pepperoni slices
1-2 Salem slices
Provolone cheese
Sliced tomato
Banana peppers
Salt and pepper
Italian seasoning

Red wine vinegar
Italian dressing
Mayonnaise
Hoagie Buns

Layer the first seven ingredients and chop well. Add the remaining ingredients to your own taste and mix all the ingredients until well combined. Once everything is well combined, stuff the ingredients into a bun and enjoy.



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Darden Restaurants buys popular steak chain in \$715M deal

Darden Restaurants entered into a definitive merger agreement with Ruth's Hospitality Group for deal valued at \$715 million, according to a Darden news release.

Darden, which owns popular restaurant chains including Olive Garden and LongHorn Steakhouse, will commence a tender offer to acquire all outstanding shares of Ruth's for \$21.50 per share, in an all-cash transaction.

The move is expected to complement Darden's existing portfolio and expand its offerings in the fine dining segment.

Ruth's Chris Steak House, which has 154 locations worldwide, will continue to be led by President Cheryl Henry and is expected to provide Darden with pre-tax synergies of between \$5 million and \$10 million in the first year, according to the release.

The transaction is expected to close in June, subject to customary closing conditions.

— Meatingplace.com

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Friday auctions can now be viewed
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EMCC Monthly Cow Sale
Friday, June 16

In conjunction with our regular sale

Weigh cows and bulls followed by odd lots start at 9:00 a.m.
Take-home cows, pairs, bulls and bred heifers start at 12:30 p.m.

We expect several consignments by sale time.
Plan on joining us and look for details, photos, and new
consignments as we get closer to the sale day on our website.

www.emcclivestock.com



**With your help, EMCC continues to grow its reputation with
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EMCC Friday start times

9:00 a.m. start time for fed cattle & pound cows, followed by bred cows
12:30 p.m. start time with veals, followed by yearlings and calves

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**We feature certain classes of cattle SOME Fridays, but we sell
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Friday, June 9Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, June 16Cow Sale in conjunction with regular Friday sale
Friday, June 23Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, June 30.....NO SALE DUE TO JULY 4 HOLIDAY WEEKEND
Friday, July 7Regular Friday sale
Friday, July 14Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, July 21Cow Sale in conjunction with regular Friday sale
Friday, July 28Special Yearling & Weaned Calf Sale with regular sale
Friday, August 4Regular Friday sale

